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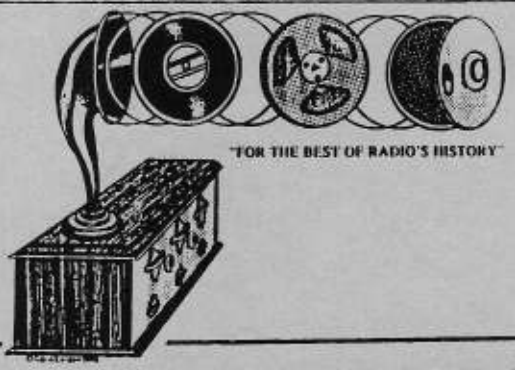

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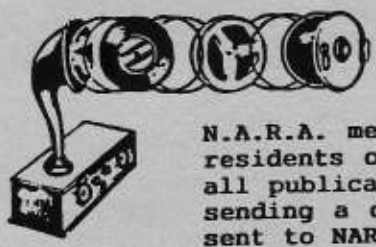

NORTH AMERICAN RADIO ARCHIVES

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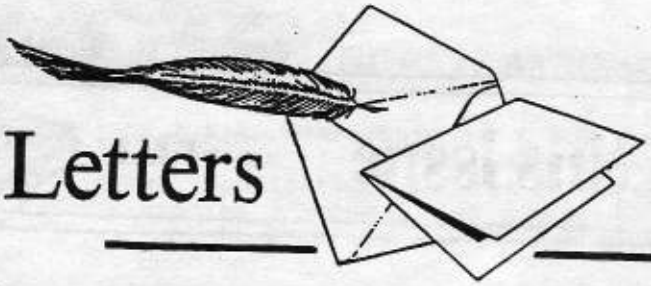


Letters from our readers

Excellent devastating cherry pink issue [the summer one]. I liked what Chuck Seeley did with the Shadow, tracing him through the pulp-movie maze without getting lost himself. Some of his facts clash with mine (in "Unclouding Clouded Minds" -- summer 1996 issue), but they are nevertheless interesting to read. Hal Skinner's interview with Morse was also excellent. I'm not as rabid a fan of Morse as some are; I thought he fudged in writing I Love a Mystery -- 4 chapter serials fleshed out to a jabbering 12, e.g., with too little real action, and Reggie with his stock English phrases. But I always enjoy the behind-the-scenes stuff about writing, and the way Morse put One Man's Family together, as Hal tells it, was fascinating. One thing you can't find fault with about Morse was his industry. In that respect he's one of my heroes, along with Paul Rhymer, Fred Allen and the chain gang literati who wrote soaps by the trainload. Also your Coughlin, my favorite radio rogue, was interesting. It's too bad there isn't much material extant on Aimee Semple McPherson's adventures behind the mike; she'd make a nice companion piece. Time is throwing a shroud over radio history: she's not even listed in my illustrated biographical dictionary. Finally, happily, the two best singing cowboys got their just praise. Jack Palmer did Roy Rogers who warbled and roped, and Frank Bresee did Gene Autry who tamed the West.

Palmer, I think, has a good idea in suggesting *NEWS* readers get better acquainted with NARA's officers. The bios could be written by the principals themselves, and edited into a tight little knot. An author index would plug another hole and futher acquaint subscribers with *NEWS* contributors and their articles. It would complement Roger Hill's summary of NARA articles a few issues ago [summer and fall, 1997 issues], which I thoroughly enjoyed.

Why doesn't somebody take a few weeks or months and summarize a long juvenile serial? Superman, e.g., or Speed Gibson, or the Firefighters, all of which are available in long runs? Even Magic Island and Jungle Jim have something to recommend them, if one has the time to sit down and gouge out the meaty portions. It would be a thorny, time-consuming job, but they would make excellent articles. If they are good, report it. If they stink, as the available early Chandu stank, report that too, so long as it is done with an even hand. I recently read a summary of the Ghost Corps put down by a deft hand, and found it excellent reading. If the dated, obscure Ghost Corps can be made interesting, what couldn't be done with the excellent Speed Gibson? The entire Gibson serial has been summarized once, but not by a writer. No tale was spun around the adventures, and there was no involvement with the characters. It awaits a serious OTR writer's attention. The half-hour Space Patrol awaits closer inspection too. That's one tight show that still retains its thrills.

Ken Weigel
Aberdeen, South Dakota

****

I thoroughly enjoyed the article about Father Coughlin. I did not of course, grow up listening to him, as we had the more staid Anglican and Presbyterian ministers, blessed by Auntie BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation]. But we did get folks like Garner Ted Armstrong and his Cathedral of Tomorrow on Radio Luxembourg. But there was nobody in the UK like Father C. I actually do have some tapes of his radio shows. I also enjoyed another cleric of the Coughlin generation although he continued on the radio and tv years later, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, altho I realize he was NOT of the same ilk.

I was not in the least surprised or shocked to learn about Jack French's encounter with Canada's National Archives [summer issue]. As was pointed out, unless you can do the copying yourself, which means a costly trip to Ottawa, they really don't cater to folks like us. I suspect the charges are put in place to be a deliberate discouragement. They are NICE people but try to visit the Archives and get anything in person, even! They store a lot of CBC material

for which you have to get written permission first from another bureaucracy, the CBC's own archives. I tried to get a copy of the Frankie Howerd Show (produced by CBC TV Toronto in the 70's and starring that great 'camp' British comedian), out of CBC Archives, who in turn had stored it at National Archives. I finally gave up. I could have made a costly journey to Ottawa, where they agreed to let me view a couple of episodes for literary 'review' purposes only. That would have meant a thousand dollar round-trip from my home and no tape to bring back with me, as CBC flatly refused to let me do a dub even if I did get to Ottawa. Unfortunately, this is so typical of CBC which has a narrow, Toronto/Ottawa mentality. They think that people living across this vast land, can hop a plane to Central Canada, no problem. They have no conception whatsoever of what Canada is all about and yet their mandate is to serve ALL citizens of Canada equally. To them, equity means, Toronto and Ottawa and the rest of Canada be damned!

Ray Smith
Regina, Saskatchewan

****

For those who are unaware of the situation, and who care, you should know that contrary to what has been announced, the cassette library, in essence, is still closed. Though their checks have been cashed, there are members who have been waiting two, three, perhaps four months, and still have not received their orders. The current librarian is doing his best but has other responsibilities which require most of his time. Unless someone comes forward who is both willing and able to give the library the attention it needs, it could have serious consequences for NARA in terms of declining membership and a loss of much-needed income.

Name withheld by request

CASSETTE LIBRARIAN NEEDED

NARA is still looking for a volunteer to take over as the librarian of the cassette library. If you would be willing to consider this very important position in our club please contact Don Aston, P.O. Box 1392, Lake Elsinore, CA 92531, or by phone at (909) 244-5242, or at his e-mail address: aston@cosmoaccess.net
Please give this some consideration!

DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOUR NARA MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES?

The mailing label on the cover of this publication shows the expiration date of your NARA membership. Please check it, and if you are close to that date why not send your $20 dues, before you forget, to our membership director: Janis DeMoss, 134 Vincewood Drive, Nicholasville, KY 40356. Make your check out to NARA.

THREE CHIMES MEAN GOOD TIMES ON NBC

by

Frank Bresee

Radio historian Frank Bresee is heard on his "GOLDEN DAYS OF RADIO" broadcast in the United States and Canada over the YESTERDAY USA SATELLITE NETWORK. Frank has a long and distinguished career as a radio performer and producer. He has worked with many greats of fantasy films. His book, RADIO'S GOLDEN YEARS, can be ordered from Frank Bresee Productions, P.O. Box 1222, Hollywood, CA 90027. Cost is $21.95 postpaid.

If you remember the days of the NBC chimes, you most likely heard the slogan "Three Chimes Mean Good Times on N-B-C." It was used for several years as the "N-I" (network identificaiton) announcement at the end of most radio shows.

But where, and when, did those chimes originate? Over the years there have been several stories about the origination of the chimes.

Some articles I have come across indicate the chimes were originated at station WSB in Atlanta, Georgia. This is incorrect. Actually, the chimes were created, and used, at radio station KFI in Los Angeles from the time the station first went on the air in 1922.

Ken Carpenter, longtime announcer of many network shows including "The Bing Crosby Show," "The Great Gildersleeve," "The Lux Radio Theatre," and most of the Armed Forces Radio Service "Command Performance" programs, was an in-person guest on my "Golden Days of Radio" program in the 1970's, and he related this story about the NBC chimes. "I was told when I first came to KFI in 1930, that the chimes that were used for so many years by NBC, were originated on KFI when the station opened in 1922. They wanted a way to identify the closing of the program so they hit those familiar bong, bong, bong chimes . . . and this was later picked up by NBC and became its identification signal for many years."

It's interesting to note that during those early years, the chimes were manually rung by the announcer on duty. It was very often a problem, and from time to time the announcer would ring the chimes in the wrong sequence. Within a few years the management at NBC had a Chicago company manufacture an automatic device, and from early in 1932 the chimes have been electronically generated.

Those original chimes (the ones used at KFI in 1922) are in existance and are currently part of an important radio collection in Los Angeles.

The three-note NBC chime signature being played into an open microphone.

TRANSCRIBED FROM TORONTO

by John Pellatt

John Pellatt is a writer, broadcaster, and performer on radio and television in Canada, Great Britain, and the United States. This includes such programs as *The Tonight Show* on NBC.

Young Muzyad Yakhoob of Toledo wanted nothing more than a career as a character actor on radio. But luckily for him, things didn't quite work out the way he had planned...

His radio career started on "The Happy Hour Club" on WMBC Detroit in 1931. It was an amateur hour show that didn't pay anything but gave Muzyad experience telling amusing stories and singing songs. On the side he also started working at a local nightclub, just until the radio work started to pay.

Muzyad "auditioned for every radio producer in town." On "The Lone Ranger" he got the job of making the sound of horses galloping by beating his chest with two toilet plungers. His only line of dialogue was to "nay" like a horse!

But slowly radio started paying a decent salary. Well, a salary. On WJR Detroit's "The News Comes to Life" Muzyad impersonated Al Jolson singing "Swanee." He got five dollars for that one. When Horace Heidt did four shows from Detroit on CBS Radio, Muzyad was a voice on the commercial for Alemite. That was bigtime network radio and paid him an unheard of thirty-five dollars per show!

But Detroit was a limited market and by 1940 Muzyad made the journey to Chicago, the mid-west mecca of radio broadcasting in those days. An impromptu visit with an old friend turned radio producer at NBC got him introduced to producer Clint Stanley. An unexpected audition for the part of a renegade Russian, "a penal colony guard on an island somewhere in South America" resulted in Muzyad getting the job on the spot. A second job was quickly offered by another producer. In less than a hour of his arrival at NBC, Muzyad had landed two acting jobs! Chicago was definitely Muzyad's kind of town...

Other roles soon followed, including a voice in another commercial--this time a Colgate commercial on the CBS Network show "Stepmother." He was paid "$22.50 for the Colgate job--$17.50 for the original broadcast and five dollars for the repeat to the west coast." More importantly, his hometown Toledo newspaper wrote a column about him with the headline "Hometown Boy Makes Good."

But radio work was not reliable. During Muzhad's fourth week as a radio character actor in Chicago, there was nothing to be had. In the fifth week, his only job was "in Nashville, playing a Southern tobacco auctioneer in a cigarette commercial on a program called 'The Uncle Ezra Camel Show.'" So it was back to the night club work again, telling stories, singing songs, just to tide himself and his family over until the radio work started coming in again. He didn't want to go back to those nasty nightclubs; he considered himself "a radio actor now" but what else could he do?

And so Muzyad agreed to perform at the 5100 Club in Chicago. And it is just as well that he did for his career as a night club entertainer would soon take off in scope and directions he could never have imagined or attained had he stayed a simple radio performer.

Embarrassed at returning to night clubs, this proud radio actor decided to assume a stage name so that his family and friends back home would never know. (He had already had his name changed once before so why not again? His Christianized legal name from a very early age had been Amos Jacobs.) He took the names from a younger brother and from his oldest brother, and created a new name--and career--for himself on that date, August 12th, 1940.

Muzyad's new name? Danny Thomas.

(Quotes and biographical information from "Make Room for Danny" by Danny Thomas, with Bill Davidson. Published 1991 by G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, New York. This is an entertaining, warm-hearted firsthand account of this remarkable performer's career. Must reading for all his fans.)

THE ANONYMITY OF RADIO ACTORS

by

Harlan Zinck

From time to time, a fan of OTR will mention how sad it is that, unlike their contemporary movie counterparts, so many successful performers from radio's golden age went unnoticed and unrecognized in public by their fans. People who listened to an actor or actress regularly on their favorite series and anthology shows could ride right next to them on a commuter train and never make the connection.

But was this relative anonymity really such a tragedy? Was the fact that we knew most radio actors by voice alone a hindrance to their celebrity or success? Or was it, instead, ultimately a benefit to their careers?

One of the major joys of being a working radio actor during the heyday of network radio had to have been the sheer diversity of material which you were asked to perform. Think of it: a soap opera in the afternoon, a dramatic anthology series in the evening, perhaps a bit on a comedy show, then ending the day by committing three murders on *Lights Out*. What an amazing test of talent and diversity - and what a challenge for a young, enthusiastic actor! (No wonder so many of the successful performers from this medium have said that you had to be young to do it.) Your appearance mattered very little; for the most part, if you could sound and act as the character was supposed to, you played the part.

But take the successful radio actor into the television era...ah, there things change! No longer could a show be put together quickly, no matter what the talent or enthusiasm of its cast and crew. There were lines to be learned, not read; sets to be built, costumes to be fitted, and casting had as much to do with your appearance as your vocal skills. No matter how talented, experienced, or diverse you were vocally, your appearance now dictated the type of roles you'd get to play.

There's many a career which would have been very different - very, very different - had it not been for the illusion and anonymity that came with radio. Consider the careers of these talented folks from the era:

Parker Fennelly, who's best known today as Allen's Alley resident Titus Moody, had been portraying similar characters on radio since the early 30's on soaps and also in the various incarnations of *Snow Village Sketches*. As he said in an interview in the early 1970's, he'd been 'old' for many years, even when he was quite young. It's unlikely he would have portrayed such characters had television been around in the 30's and equally unlikely that anyone seeing him in the street would have linked him with his bucolic, nor'eastern characters. Yet, because radio was sound and not pictures, he had a successful career as an old man for decades. (Interesting that, once television became dominant, his primary claim to fame remained his voice...providing narration for Pepperidge Farm commercials. Apparently, Pepperidge Farm really does remember!)

Art Van Harvey, the wonderful "Vic" alongside the equally wonderful Bernadine Flynn as "Sade," was, in cast photographs, quite obviously either too old for his pretty young wife or was just one darned lucky middle-aged man! Yet, when you hear them together in episodes of this classic series, their voices fit together so well that you can hardly imagine them *not* being married. Likewise, Ms. Flynn's photos of the period - unless she is specifically posed to look like we

perhaps imagine Sade looks - show her to be the successful radio actress and doctor's wife she was in real life. On TV or in movies, we'd find them visually to be a very odd couple indeed. ("Is that her father or what?!?")

Gale Gordon had no peer when it came to playing exasperated public officials and pompous management types. Can you imagine anyone else playing Mayor LaTrivia, Osgood Conklin, or Rexall's Mr. Scott, or possibly playing them so well? Yet his radio career was far more diverse than these outstanding roles would indicate, including Shakespeare in the 1930's, soaps, drama shows, and of course the sadly short-lived *Casebook of Gregory Hood*. Yet for nearly 40 years on television, whether known as Mr. Conklin, Mr. Wilson, or Mr. Mooney, he really played only one role.

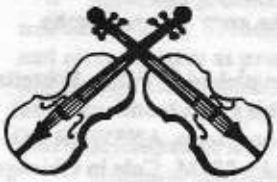
John Todd played Tonto for years. Have you ever seen a picture of him? No recognizing Tonto on the street...unless you thought of Tonto as a big middle-aged guy smoking a pipe!

Minerva Pious was, as Fred Allen frequently said, one of the most talented and multi-faceted performers he'd ever worked with, playing everything from Brooklyn bobbysoxers to society matrons to southern belles to Pansy Nussbaum. Yet, if one looks at photos of her from the 40's, she looks pretty much like a young Mrs. Nussbaum: short, built close to the ground, and strongly ethnic. (In later years, making stage appearances, her career consisted primarily of variations on the theme of the Jewish mother.) Yet radio didn't care what she looked like, which gave her tremendous opportunities to play characters from all over the map.

I recently listened back-to-back to a number of 50's episodes from both *Gunsmoke* and *Suspense* and was utterly amazed by the range exhibited by Parley Baer, whom I previously knew mostly from such 60's sitcoms as *Petticoat Junction* and *Green Acres*. Looking at him on TV, you would never imagine what talents lay hidden behind that amiable, mid-western, slightly doughy exterior! (Even listening to him on radio, who'd ever have guessed he'd spend the later years of his career playing a Keebler elf? Now *there's* vocal diversity!)

Olan Soule and Les Tremayne spent many years as successful leading men on radio, both being featured particularly in the *First Nighter* series. They both had interesting and unique voices which allowed them to play a wide variety of dramatic roles. Yet, once they began to rely on TV and the movies to make their living, Soule usually ended up type-cast as the kind of guy he physically resembled: the next-door neighbor, the slightly harried father, or the middle-management accountant behind a desk. Tremayne was, to my mind, embarrassingly placed in quite a lot of rather cheesy and cheap sci-fi flicks, trying hard to lend credibility to his roles as the scientist, the doctor, the general, or some similar establishment type. (Don't get me wrong; they were both excellent, professional actors who did their best at all times, but it's hard to be taken seriously when you're appearing in schlock.)

It's interesting to note that, aside from stars like Benny and Cantor who also appeared in films and movie actors who made appearances on dramatic shows like *The Lux Radio Theater* and *Suspense*, almost the only people on radio who generally *looked* as they *sounded* like were the announcers. Ken Carpenter *was* a tall, lanky, amiable sidekick for Bing Crosby. Don Wilson *was* fat and jovial. Bill Goodwin, although happily married, *did* dress in stylish sportswear and enjoy the company of attractive ladies. (Don't we all?)



From
JACK PALMER

GRANDPA JONES

Another early country music radio pioneer and Country Music Hall Of Fame member also died in 1998. Louis Marshall Jones, called "Grandpa" Jones for most of his long career, was born in Niagra, Kentucky on October 20, 1913, the youngest of ten children. His father was a tobacco farmer for most of his life, and they moved frequently during his childhood, including a short stay in Indiana.

Louis' mother sang the old ballads and his father was an old-time fiddler. With his parent's background and listening to Saturday night barn dance shows on the radio (The WLS Barn Dance had began broadcasting in 1924), Marshall (as he was called by his family) became interested in the old time music and managed to learn to play a few chords on a borrowed guitar. While the family was living in Henderson, Kentucky, Marshall's older brother purchased a guitar for 75 cents and presented it to Marshall. Shortly thereafter, Marshall's family finally left Kentucky for good and ended up in Akron, Ohio, where the family, like many Kentuckians, felt there were better job opportunities. By the time the family was settled in Akron, Jones had learned to play the guitar well enough to play at local square dances and even sing and play at high school assemblies.

In 1929, Wendell Hall came to town to promote a talent contest over a local radio station. Jones won the first prize of $50, which he immediately used to purchase a new guitar. His first appearance on the radio for this contest generated enough interest that he was soon appearing on local radio stations in Akron with his new guitar. He was just 16.

Marshall remained in the Akron area for the next three years, performing on three different local stations, WJW, WADC and WFIC. He billed himself as "The Young Singer Of Old Songs". In 1931, he teamed up with another young country artist, Joe Troyan, and they performed together for over six years. He also managed to graduate from high school in 1932.

Late that same year, Marshall and Joe were hired to appear on the LUM AND ABNER show. The show which had only been on the air about a year, had become a big success and the stars, Chester Lauck and Norris Goff, had decided to move the show to Cleveland from Chicago and add a Friday Night Social to their regular program schedule. Marshall and Joe with the rest of their group auditioned and were hired to perform as the old time string band on the weekly show. The show was broadcast on WTAM in Cleveland as well as 44 more stations across the country and was sponsored by Ford. In addition to the show, the band also made personal appearances with Lum and Abner. The Friday Night Socials only lasted for one year and by 1934, Lum and Abner were again broadcasting from Chicago, and Marshall and Joe were back in Akron playing the local clubs and radio stations.

In February, 1935, Marshall and Joe appeared on a bill with Bradley Kincaid at an Akron charity affair. Bradley liked their act and asked them to join him on the east coast. Soon they were appearing with Kincaid on WBZ, Boston. It was during this time that Kincaid gave Jones his name. The night time personal appearances and teh next morning's early radio show did not go well wiht Jones. He was not an early riser and he was usually complaining about working at such an early hour. His grouchiness led Kincaid to compare him to an old man, and he called him "Grandpa" on the show one morning. The

name stuck, and although Jones was only 22 years old, he soon had adopted a stage costume of high topped boots, red suspenders and a large, bushy fake mustache. Eventually he grew his own bushy mustache and became "Grandpa" for the rest of his life.

In 1937 Grandpa, Joe and Bradley went their separate ways and Jones picked WWVA, Wheeling, West Virginia to began performing with his own group, Grandpa Jones and his Grandchildren. That year he also wrote his first song for publication. Although never a big hit, Jones' song, ANSWER TO MAPLE ON THE HILL was a big thrill for Grandpa, when it was published by M. M. Cole in Chicago.

After a couple of years at Wheeling, Jones moved north to WTIC, Hartford, Connecticut, then back to Fairmont, West Virginia and station WMNN the following year. By 1941 he had settled in at WLW, Cincinnati. He was now selling his songbooks over the air as well as developing his repertoire of Folk ballads, old time songs, Gospel and other country favorites. He also learned to play the banjo from Cousin Emmy, a popular country music star from the area.

While at WLW, Grandpa teamed up with Merle Travis and Alton and Rabon Delmore to form the Brown's Ferry Four, a Gospel quartet. The group's featuring on the radio of the new gospel songs being written and performed by many country artists help to popularize the genre. Merle Travis and Grandpa Jones also began making records for the newly formed independent King Record Company of Cincinnati.

In 1944, Grandpa was drafted into the Army. He ended up in Munich, Germany shortly after the war ended, where he performed on the Armed Forces Network station. I listened to the station regularly at that time, but can not remember Grandpa Jones. Grandpa returned to Cincinnati when he was discharged early in 1946. However, he did not return to WLW. Instead he joined THE GRAND OLE OPRY, with a little assist from Bradley Kincaid. His first appearance was as a singer with Pee Wee King's band. Grandpa had also began recording for King records on a regular basis. In fact, Grandpa and the Delmores were flown to Hollywood, so they could team up with Merle Travis and record as the Brown's Ferry Four.

In October, 1946, Grandpa married his second wife, Ramona Riggins. Ramona was a very talented musician in her own right, playing the violin and mandolin and singing. She was already appearing of the OPRY when Grandpa and her were married. Now that Jones was a member of THE GRAND OLD OPRY, Grandpa and Ramona settled in Nashville. Soon Grandpa had her included as a prominent part of his act. While Grandpa stuck to the banjo and vocals, Ramona played the violin and mandolin and also sang. In 1948, they left the OPRY and moved to Virginia, where they made personal appearances around Washington, DC and broadcast on WARL, Arlington. The Joneses also appeared on THE OLD DOMINION BARN DANCE in Richmond. The show was one of the four barn dance shows being broadcast in rotation by CBS in the early1950s.

By 1952, Grandpa had returned to the GRAND OLE OPRY for good, although there was a six month's leave in 1957. That year, Grandpa was offered a chance to replace Jimmy Dean as emcee on a live television show in Washington, DC. The show lasted only a few months against the rock and roll onslaught, and Grandpa returned to the OPRY and remained a member until his death.

Some of Grandpa's best known songs were recorded in his early King days. Songs such as RATTLER, IT'S RAINING HERE THIS MORNING, EIGHT MORE MILES TO LOUISVILLE and MOUNTAIN DEW brought him his national notice. By this time, he was playing the banjo instead of the guitar and his banjo playing became his trademark for the rest of his life. He later recorded for Victor, Decca and Monument.

Grandpa made several country music films in Hollywood and also did tours of Korea during the Korean War. In 1969 he became a regular on a TV show that made him one of the best known country stars in American, HEE HAW. He remained on the show through its CBS network broadcast years and for the long years of syndication.

Although probably best known for his comedy and banjo playing on HEE HAW, Grandpa Jones was also a strong advocate of the old-time country music. In the 1970s he became one of the founders and served a term as president of the Association of Country Entertainers, a organization formed as a protest against the modernization of the Country Music Association.

In 1978, Grandpa Jones was inducted into the Country Music Hall Of Fame. In his later years, Grandpa did little touring, but limited his performances to the OPRY.

Grandpa celebrated his fiftieth anniversary on the GRAND OLE OPRY in 1997. On January 3, 1998, Jones had a severe stroke minutes after he had finished his second OPRY performance of the evening. He never recovered and died on February 19, 1998.

THE GHOST THAT STILL WALKS

by

John Stanley

John Stanley is a former broadcaster and newspaper columnist in the San Francisco area. Currently he writes for a number of national publications including *TV Guide*. He has allowed us to share with you the following from a booklet that he has printed for Elderhostel classes that he teaches.

I was raised, like so many of you, on radio. From the time I was six I can remember hearing mystery shows. One of my first memories was a Peter Lorre thriller in which a severed hand came to life and stalked him, driving him closer and closer to madness, until the final minutes when Lorre went stark raving insane--and was strangled by "The Beast With Five Fingers." Well, television replaced my radio listening in 1955 and dramatic/entertainment radio left my life forever. Or so I thought. But by the late 1960's, all across America old-time radio was being rediscovered and becoming a passionate hobby for thousands of Americans, myself included. My own high passion for old time radio (known as OTR to its appreciators) was apparent when I decided to write a story for the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1970 and describe the burgeoning field of collecting and listening to old transcriptions newly discovered and transferred to tape. I began it thusly:

> "Along a cob-webbed corridor, its chain clanking only faintly and its spectral glow casting but a weak illumination, a ghost walks. It moves uncertainly, unnoticed by all but those few who have dared to enter the deserted, eerie house this thing haunts. The house I speak of, in hushed tones, is radio. Not radio as we know it today (an endless stream of talk, music, news and more talkmusicnews) but as it existed in the Golden Days of dramatic radio. The ghost is made up of its soundwaves, its personalities and its programs as they existed before television was to replace them with images that turned most of us into zombie-like, brain-numbed spectators who no longer had to think for ourselves."

Maybe I got a little carried away back then, but my enthusiasm in rediscovering the shows that had made such a lasting impression on my childhood is genuine. Perhaps you feel the same way.

It was a time when thousands of the old shows were being found in warehouses and attics all over America, and there existed an underground network of collectors, who bought shows from each other or traded reels of material back and forth. Those early beginnings set into motion a major OTR movement in America that is thriving as never before.

Jim Cox

DAYTIME DIARY

Author's Roundtable

In a workshop for aspiring authors many years ago I heard a speaker say: "It's important to write ... but it's even more important to have written."

When I finished the 700-page manuscript for *The Great Radio Soap Operas*, published by McFarland & Co. in July, I realized all over again that that lecturer's aphorism contained a lot of truth. While I had given more than two years to pulling together the raw material for that book, one reviewer claimed it read as if I had put 30 to 40 years into it based on an obvious love for those programs. I hadn't thought of it that way but could agree that he wasn't far off the mark. The project was a labor of love dating not merely to the 1960s when I began a radio memorabilia collection but all the way to the 1940s when the serials were broadcast live and I sometimes tuned in.

Passing through central Arizona one day last spring I chatted with our esteemed NARA editor Jim Snyder. Somehow we got onto the topic of OTR book publishing. He told me he'd been hoping someone would come along who would share something of a personal pilgrimage in writing for publication. Was that a door-opener or not? I volunteered to provide it and this column is a result. I hope I have accomplished what the editor intended.

Just how does anyone aspiring to write a book about old time radio become a published author? Well that my friends is the $64 question.

A few do it with "connections," I suppose, implying that *who* they know may be as important as *what* they know. Others may succeed by being in the right place at the right time, just as a publisher is looking for precisely what a writer peddling his wares has to offer. My belief is that -- while both of these may apply -- most published authors have to have something more: They must be informed about their subjects and have an abiding interest in them, plus possess remarkable skills in research and communication, be solemnly disciplined and be willing to make a commitment to the thousands of hours it will take to produce a book. If they can do all that, no small amount of luck will also be required to turn a manuscript into print, whether a subsidy job [in which the author underwrites some or all of the production costs from his own pocket] or with a "legitimate" concern paying all of the freight.

I've done it both ways, and something in-between.

I peddled my first book two decades ago to a number of legit outfits, all of whom turned it down. That may have been because I was an unknown. It may have been that they didn't like it. Perhaps the market was saturated with books on that topic, either published by them or their competitors. That's when a friend told me he believed in the idea enough

to finance half the production and marketing costs through a subsidy firm if I'd finance the other half. I agreed and we ordered 1000 copies to be printed. We promoted it through direct mail and word of mouth and several years later re-couped our investment by the skin of our teeth, finally selling every book. It's an experience I'm glad I had -- and one I'd never want to repeat. Too much effort after the fact there.

Subsequently on behalf of three separate non-profit organizations I wrote a trio of historical volumes for which the sponsoring alliances picked up the tab. That's a novel way of becoming a published author, when you're guaranteed publication [even before beginning to write] while a third party stands good for the reparations. Works for me.

Finally, there's an even better way, and the way I sold *The Great Radio Soap Operas*. I approached a "legitimate" publisher with my manuscript and found skilled craftspeople who were willing to take a chance on me, a virtual unknown. This article is an attempt to convey that story and perhaps inspire others who might have a book idea floating around in their heads, too.

Working in my behalf was a measure of luck, determination, discipline and being in the right place at the right time. I had been thinking about writing that book for years but believed somebody somewhere would produce one similar to what I had in mind. In the book's Preface, I recalled what happened next:

> *As the years rolled by I ascertained that no such work had come on the market. It occurred to me that it might be up to me to write such a book as a service to present and future radio enthusiasts. This volume is my attempt to scratch my long-standing itch to make some kind of contribution to the radio field. With apologies to an advertising copywriter for a popular brand of syrup, I'm asking myself: "Mr. Cox, why did you wait so long?"*

It turned out that -- since radio drama left the air in the early 1960s -- only one book had been released dealing exclusively with the radio soap operas. [There were several majoring on TV which mentioned radio.] Mary Jane Higby's *Tune in Tomorrow*, first issued in 1966, was a wonderful treatise on her behind-the-scenes experiences as a serial heroine. But as good as it was, it was limited -- she primarily covered the handful of dramas on which she appeared. Little there to encompass the wide range of the genre.

Thus, early in 1996 I began the formidable task of researching a new book, and eventually writing it. I explained in the Annotated Bibliography how I proceeded:

> *To compile the data in this text, I heard literally hundreds and hundreds of tapes and recordings of radio serials, listening to some of them scores of times. I read and reread stacks of soap opera scripts, making voluminous notes as I went through them. In the process, I was acquiring an insatiable appetite for still more information. Legions of periodicals*

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partially conquered the hunger, offering a wealth of anecdotes and little-known facts about the serials and the people who made them happen.

In addition, my secondary sources included newspaper clippings, magazine articles, items appearing in trade journals and vintage radio club newsletters. I specifically relied on Broadcasting, Journal of Broadcasting, Life, Movie-Radio Guide, Newsweek, The New Yorker, New York Times, North American Radio Archives News, Radioland, Radio Mirror and its successor Radio and Television Mirror, SPERDVAC Radiogram, Time, True Experiences and Variety. I also leaned heavily on unpublished compilations such as Jay Hickerson's "Necrology of Radio Personalities." I pored over tidbits of data supplied by interested friends and parties with whom I exchange, via computer, news about the hobby.

The primary research included interviewing a few of the living legends of radio soap operas. Extensive correspondence and telephone dialogues with these artists and other individuals on the fringes of the genre helped clarify and substantiate portions of the printed material and place it in proper perspective.

Finally, I scoured libraries in several major metropolitan centers in search of documents that would shed light on obscure details.

About a year into the process [while writing the 16th of what turned out to be 31 chapters] I ran across a notation in a publishing catalog that told me McFarland & Co., a small book concern in the mountains of western North Carolina, was looking for manuscripts from would-be authors. McFarland isn't a subsidy publisher and that notice certainly piqued my curiosity. I contacted McFarland and was soon speaking with Steve Wilson, their senior editor. [My hopes were dashed in another area when he assured me he was *not* the infamous crusading chief of *The Illustrated Press* with that same name from OTR's *Big Town*!] In less than a month following our initial discussions Steve was telling me "We feel certain we can come together on some kind of book." That bolstered my enthusiasm for completing the project like nothing could have.

A friendship began that has extended through scores of communications since, including a trip to McFarland to meet the people I was dealing with and to see headquarters for myself. At the appropriate juncture I provided four sample chapters of text so the editorial staff could get a grip on where I was headed. They wanted to be certain I wasn't committing any unpardonable sins that would create obstacles to a marketable product later.

Lest the reader acquire the mistaken impression that never was heard a discouraging word between publisher and author, let me assure you that that simply wasn't the case. At the same time it wasn't something that became insurmountable. The McFarland folks have been in the publishing business since 1979 and I often reminded myself that they know their stuff better than I could ever hope to second guess it. Yet I held my ground on certain

points; sometimes they wouldn't budge an inch. Sometimes the issues weren't worth haggling over. One of us finally gave in, albeit reluctantly. I remember that I wanted a different title for the book. They offered substantial reasons for turning down my choice and on that one they never backed down. It was a bitter pill for me to swallow but I think when we got past that issue our indecisiveness [and stubbornness] on other topics melted away.

Throughout the entire process I felt that I was treated with dignity and respect and that McFarland officials welcomed my input. They encouraged me to take a stand and defend my ground for which I am grateful. Sometimes we were able to reach compromises, creating win-win situations. I never wanted to be perceived as arrogant or so determined to have my way that they would regret I had a signed their contract. Looking back, I can say I believe both parties were working together for the common good.

My greatest disappointment was what seemed to be an inordinate amount of time that elapsed between my submitted manuscript and the publication date, 15 months later. [I had supplied hard copy plus the entire book on disks so typesetting wouldn't have to be repeated.] Somehow I had gained the impression that books could be available in six months. When that didn't happen I got antsy. The next nine months were a slow wait for me, particularly after some promotional literature went out from the company announcing an April 1999 release date. In reality books didn't roll from the presses until July. It was an eye-opener I'll likely be better prepared to deal with the next time.

Within a month of our initial discussions in 1997 McFarland and I were talking possible sequels to this book. Exploring a number of avenues, in 1998 we signed a contract for a volume pertaining to radio's audience participation shows. I am well into writing that one. We have several ideas we're toying with for subsequent works.

Sometimes McFarland's book covers come off in solid pale, somewhat drab colors sans illustrations, bearing only title and author's name in standard typeface. The bulk of the firm's business is for commercial, private, government, public and other libraries, all of which demand a high quality binding that will withstand the rigors of repeated use. This substantial "library binding" undoubtedly inflates the selling price. Aesthetics, regretfully, doesn't always play a key role. Yet the company insists on very high quality recycled text paper so the books are well put together.

I don't know why the creative people took a particular liking to my text but its design was a departure from the norm and a welcome surprise. *The Great Radio Soap Operas* features a black-and-white cover photograph of two serial stars. The picture is set in the midst of an attractive green border. The title and author's name are in non-standard type. On the reverse side, which is normally left blank on McFarland books, there are liner notes and a bar code [obviously for sales through commercial outlets]. Wow! It's almost too good to be true. [And a boatload of comments from friends have praised the book's looks. Not my doing, of course, but I'm extremely grateful to the McFarland designers. Perhaps this is a foretaste of future attractions.]

There were various rewards that unexpectedly came my way as I prepared that book. In pursuing the research I was fortunate to locate a small

handful of luminaries who had played on the soap operas between 1930-1960. [Most of their contemporaries, as you would imagine, have passed on, or have fading memories.] My conversations and exchanges with these heroes and heroines helped convey understanding in how their lives blended into that fast-paced weekday activity. I am grateful for their input and have maintained contact with several since those interviews.

One of the most difficult areas I had to comprehend and attempt to explain to readers of the book was the rating system -- including audience share -- applied by the Hooper and Nielsen organizations during radio's heyday. This is more complicated than it first appears to a novice and you would not believe how many contacts I made in an effort to reach someone who could make heads or tails of it -- at least enough that I could grasp the concept and relay it. After several months of trying, someone finally directed me to an office within the Nielsen organization and I lodged my appeal there. A short time later a young lady phoned to tell me that, while no one in that office could help me, she knew a man "who knows all about this stuff and he should be able to help you." She assured me she would get in touch with him and see what he could do. No name was given and I had my doubts that I'd hear anything further. But just two or three days later UPS rang my bell bearing a 3-page letter from none other than Arthur C. Nielsen Jr., the firm's chairman emeritus! In it he answered all of my questions about ratings and share in terms I could fully comprehend. The lady certainly *did* know someone with the answers. While I didn't get her name, I shall be grateful forever for this serendipitous moment she provided.

What would I do today if I had never been published but had an idea for a manuscript pertaining to old time radio and was willing to make the sacrifices to turn it into a salable product? I'd probably write a couple of sample chapters and accompany them with a thesis of what I hoped to accomplish, including a chapter-by-chapter outline. Then I'd peddle it to legitimate publishers with a track record in OTR volumes. In addition to McFarland I'd explore Scarecrow Press, Easton Valley Press, Stein and Day, Cowles, Doubleday, Nelson-Hall Inc., Penguin Putnam Inc. and some of the university presses, particularly Oxford, North Carolina and Oklahoma.

I'd offer a lingering word of encouragement to any who might wish to try this: Don't be discouraged if you are turned down by a publisher. Instead, resolve to look elsewhere, making changes in your sample chapters and outline only if they seem warranted. It could take many months and many rejection slips before you land an acceptance, and that isn't guaranteed. You must believe in yourself and your own ability if you are to succeed as an author. Never give up.

One day perhaps you will realize the exhilaration that results not only from *writing* -- but from *having written*! Now I know the full measure of that speaker's words that I heard so long ago.

[*If anyone desires to communicate with me on this topic, or wants my input in helping to become a published author, I'll be happy to try to advise. You may contact me at otrbuff@juno.com*]

EDITOR'S NOTE: Information on ordering Jim's new book can be found on the next page.

NEW BOOK

For over two years you've been reading Jim Cox's column, "Daytime Diary," here in the *NARA News*. This usually, but not always, deals with the "radio soaps." Well, he's just put out a new book, *The Great Radio Soap Operas*.

First, take a box of soap flakes. Add to this one fragile but determined heroine, who wed above her station. Mix in a motherly type who dispenses advice from her kitchen. Toss in one homespun fellow with a talent for solving crimes and patching up marriages. Now, serve this in America's kitchens every weekday for thirty years. The result is a unique form of entertainment that was born on the radio and drew millions of listeners from 1930 to 1960. Now, Jim Cox brings the "washboard weepers" back to life in this detailed history.

Jim states, in his preface, that after the golden age of radio ended he began to seriously collect materials from the era. Over the years he acquired an extensive library of recordings, tapes, books, autographs, correspondence, photographs and other memorabilia. He said that he kept searching for factual information flavored with anecdotes and obscure details about the daytime serials that had been missed by other authors. He wanted glimpses into the lives of favorite performers, and some perspective on how those dramas themselves made it to the airwaves. When he ascertained that no such work was available he decided that it would be up to him to write such a book.

Jim's book details thirty-one of the 200 or so radio soap operas. With each of the thirty-one he gives the factual information regarding major characters, cast and crew members, sponsors, ratings, and broadcast dates. He then goes on to give the overall theme of the program and gives a detailed story line synopsis. By the end of the chapter on a particular show you really do know what it was all about.

There are two interesting sections at the end of the book. The first lists "soap opera firsts, lasts, and mosts." The second lists, by year, the debut of 205 daytime serials. The 331 page book also contains a number of photographs.

The book can be ordered for $59.00, postpaid, from McFarland and Company, Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640. With a credit card it can be ordered by phone at (800) 253-2187.

Do you know where the tape pioneer "AMPEX" got its name? It's from the initials of its founder Alexander M. Poniatoff with an added "ex" for excellence.

Radio in WWII—

Applying the Whip & Wit to Home Front Rationing

by
ken weigel©

It has been suggested that the daytime soap genre moved at a snail's gallop in getting the home front involved during wartime. Token references are cited where the only evidence of participation is when Grandma baked a "victory cake" (without sugar), or Auntie's youngster, a proud member of the High School Victory Corps, canvassed the neighborhood collecting tin cans and distributing anti-black market pledge cards. Often, the radio historian tells us, that was the extent of the daytime drama's complicity.

It was just such lilliputian nods to civilian duty that produced daytime oh-God-the-pain-of-it series like *Victory Volunteers* and *Victory Front*, two network shows undertaken "in cooperation with the United States Government." Both shows set out to portray familiar daytime radio characters in their fictional small towns coping with delicate wartime issues. The idea being that if housewives heard the Goldbergs making sacrifices, and Portia likewise facing life head on, they might be encouraged to do the same.

Victory Volunteers was suggested by the Radio Division of the Office of War Information (OWI) and coordinated by War Writers Board (WWB) chairman Rex Stout and member Clifton Fadiman, who was then also moderating *Information, Please*. It debuted over NBC in October 1942, with Fadiman narrating and reading the government messages. *Victory Front*, the CBS replication of *Victory Volunteers*, debuted the following month. John T. Frederick read the messages, urging listeners to cooperate with this or that government program to "help win the war."

Each week both of these *Victory* series portrayed "people we meet every day on the radio [who] have volunteered their services to the government." Each aired a complete drama in five15-minute instalments (Monday through Friday), and each opened and closed with the first notes of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony—the morse V. Listeners followed *Stella Dallas, Portia Faces Life, Ma Perkins, Young Dr. Malone* and other favorites as they tackled a variety of problems dealing with war's cruel demands. The bogies these make-believe folks dodged—inflation and price controls, for example—were cushioned with patriotic overtures to conserve, to volunteer, and to get involved. The dialog was spiced with powerful injunctions against hoarding food, black marketeering, careless talk and other criminal behavior, as we shall presently see. The tip was to show that America counted on the support of every woman to help bring home "victory," so that dad, son or brother could reclaim his place at the dinner table. War was no longer strictly a masculine preoccupation.

To back up a step, it should be remembered that Japan's near monopoly on the world's rubber trees had reduced America's store of automobile tires to a tiny pile. And without tires, Americans were told, the United States could not "keep the troops rolling to victory." Yet

another incentive to rationing gasoline was the sinking of tankers in the Atlantic by U-boats which depleted fuel supplies; this was also the chief reason rationing—and rationing jokes on radio—was first tested on the east coast, where gas tanks actually ran dry in the summer of 1942.

To save rubber Americans were asked, as early as 1941, to recycle tires and other rubber items, and in the spring of 1942 gasoline rationing went into effect in 17 eastern states. By late fall that year, when *Victory Volunteers* and *Victory Front* came to the air, Americans were grousing because rationing had crimped their freedom to motor about gaddingly, that being the holiest of freedoms, after grousing, guaranteed under the Constitution. When, on December 1, after many poker sessions with his petroleum coordinator, Roosevelt's new gas rationing scheme became law, unhappy motorists let out a roar that resonated from Tokyo to Berlin. Along with other wartime sacrifices the home front was making, the new mandate resulted in the aforementioned two *Victory* programs.

The job of hard-selling motorists fell to the WWB/OWI radio tacticians. It is those two organizations to whom we owe the following information dug out from an episode of "Romance of Helen Trent," heard on *Victory Front*. As the play gets under way, Belle is telling Helen about the letter she received from her sweetheart Jim, who is fighting Japanese in the Pacific. Hers is fundamentally the voice of Uncle Sam telling listeners to stop kicking and submit. If the reader will indulge me—listen:

> *Belle: There are men fighting, standing up to the Japs and fighting for their lives, fighting for us. And they need rubber. They need it for airplanes, for gun carriages, for everything. And we quibble about it here....The Japs have taken our rubber away from us, rubber that we desperately need to keep our fighting men going, and transportation at home going. Why, if we don't conserve the precious little rubber we have we could lose the war....Gas rationing, mileage rationing, tire inspection can all be summed up in two words: rubber shortage. We have to save rubber no matter if we have gasoline gushing up in our back yards, because no place in America have we got enough rubber. Not anywhere!....Pleasure driving should be out for the duration. Actually, pleasure driving impedes the war effort and helps the Axis. Certainly nobody in America is going to do that!*

Belle then reads the letter she received from Jim:

> *Jim [filter]: Darling, we're fighting here to get back what they took from us. And we mean to get it. We see cartoons in the papers about people joking about gas rationing, and it's great. We know this means that Americans are doing what they've always done—taking a job in stride and doing it a bit better than anyone else. If it's saving on rubber they'll do it. They'll park their cars, they'll walk, they'll save pencil erasers, because they believe that some guys out in the Solomons and elsewhere around the world are doing their jobs. And so, Angel, even if it's tough we can remember looking at the picture of the family sitting in their automobile eating sandwiches, and the automobile is up on blocks. We can think of that, and know back home we've got all the backing we need.*

Victory Front and *Victory Volunteers* did not silence the detractors of daytime drama for shirking its duty, but they did sound the alarm, if only briefly. Their message was clear: being non-combatants did not excuse home front civilians from making sacrifices.

New tire restrictions, meanwhile, allowed car owners to keep five tires; the rest were deemed "idle," and had to be turned in to Uncle Sam, who doled them out to essential users. The following excerpt, from mid-November 1942, shows what one radio comedian, Fred Allen, did with pertinent information sent him by the OWI. This was heard about the

same time Helen Trent's friend Belle was lowering the boom on listeners about rubber. Allen asks Arthur Godfrey, his announcer, what he's been up to:

Godfrey: I registered my tires, and I re-registered my gasoline. I got so many stickers on my car now my windshield looks like Mrs. Roosevelt's suitcase.

Allen: A friend of mine lost his "A" card, Arthur. He couldn't drive his car so he brought it into his parlor and jacked it up.

Godfrey: In his parlor? Why didn't he put the car in his garage?

Allen: He's still using the cigaret lighter and the radio in the car.

Two days later, the announcer on *Suspense*, a new mystery anthology, weighed in with a similar OWI announcement on gasoline rationing. As the curtain came down on "Menace in Wax" listeners were challenged

to conserve the rubber we have by eliminating all unnecessary driving. When we think of the tremendous distances our mechanized army is traveling in North Africa, and the long road to victory that still lies ahead, this extra effort on our part is slight indeed....The best way each of us can save rubber is by sharing our car with others. Let one car do the work for two or three. So why not arrange with the neighbors tonight and start sharing the car tomorrow. It's the one real important contribution that every automobile driver can make. Don't be a lone ride. Share your car and do your share for victory.

The dreaded "A" coupon, mentioned by Allen, reduced a car owner's gas allotment to four gallons a week, or roughly twice around the block and back into the garage. That put an end to all but "essential" driving. On December 1, politicians took to the airwaves to remind motorists all across God's green footstool that "victory rides on wheels" at a 35-mph "victory speed," and that thereafter they could not buy gasoline without a mileage rationing book. Harold Ickes, Roosevelt's petroleum coordinator, told Americans to "keep your car in the garage unless you absolutely must use it. Eliminate immediately all driving for pleasure." Unessential driving was deemed a hazardous indulgence, and harsh penalties awaited those caught cheating. Once again Helen Trent put romance aside to counsel her devotees. If the country's transportation system failed, she said, it

would mean failure for our whole war effort. You can keep the wheels of your car going for unessential driving, or you can keep the wheels of the war moving. The choice is yours.

Such admonitions had the desired effect, but they were also gristle for the wits in radio land. A few weeks later, Jack Benny fans heard Mary Livingstone repeat a gag Fred Allen told:

Mary: Fred said a policeman stopped some people driving downtown Broadway last Sunday and said, "Hey, don't you know you're not supposed to drive around in your car anymore? Where ya goin'?" The driver said, "We're goin' over to see the Jack Benny Program." And the cop said, "Well, as long as it's not for pleasure, go ahead."

Hollywood, too, gave a big push to conservation efforts, often with a heavy assist from Uncle Sam's hype mill. The OWI's Bureau of Motion Pictures produced some 26 "Victory Films" for distribution around the country. The Warner Bros. cartoon factory, to ascend a notch, drafted Mel Blanc to put movie audiences in a conservation mood. In "Salvage Warden" Daffy Duck, the proprietor of Daffy's Scrap Pile, sang about "doing the job with junk":

Pots, pans, old tin cans,
Pails, nails, empty jails,
Fats, hats, rubber mats,

Missing links, kitchen sinks,
Garbage cans, 'lectric fans,
Rubber boots, bathing suits,
Reels, wheels, run-down heels,
Bed springs, piston rings,
Metal shears, old tin ears,
Tires, chains, water mains,
Skates, plates, furnace grates,
Pitching forks, rubber corks,
Plugs, mugs, bathroom rugs,
Rubber bands, bird cage stands,
Metal snips, pillow slips,
Locks, socks, grampa clocks--
[Daffy pants breathlessly]

* * *

The so-called "road to victory" the U.S. had embarked on led government boosters, radio writers and advertisers down murky paths and quirky streets. Along with authentic messages encouraging drivers to curb pleasure driving, check rumors and car pool appeared some W.C. Fieldsian fustian in the guise of appeals to patriotism. First among those exploiting Victory were the advertisers. The conduct of the advertising industry was exemplary in the early stages of war, when advertisers routed countless War Advertising Council messages to network programs. Before the U.S. joined the Allied cause, and in the months following Pearl Harbor, they were content to promote their products by finding some common ground between war and washday soap or headache pain. Usually they only tied their products to Victory, like the photo merchant who peddled "*victory* enlargements for servicemen and women," or the greeting card vendor who urged those writing soldiers to "keep their spirits up to a *victory* tempo" by sending them a "_____" card. Advertisers even denounced the unethical; hyperbolic rebukes, especially to black marketeers, were frequently issued—*viz:*

Did you drown a sailor today because YOU *bought a lamb chop without giving up the required coupons?*

But as the war began to go the Allies' way their familiar flat notes were heard once again, and by war's end they were laying it on with a trowel. One example—of hundreds—will suffice. In early 1944, the announcer on the *Fibber McGee and Molly* program, sponsored by a leading wax merchant, advised victory gardeners who wanted to make their work "easier" to "wax both metal parts and wooden handles" of their rakes, hoes and spades. Such an invitation was the antithesis of conservation, but a step away from inviting folks to "splash a little of the stuff on your hair, dump the rest on the ground, and rush out and buy another case."

Nor was the radio industry free of the taint of mythomania. The National Association of Broadcasters shamelessly took sole credit not only for getting eight million victory gardens under way, but for enticing 24,000 women to join the ranks of badly needed nurses. The WWB and OWI would have something to say about that.

For the curious, here follows a short list of wartime programs heard at various times exploiting the Victory tag. *Labor for Victory* was a 15-minute weekly series, begun in April 1942. It gave the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations

a chance to promote labor's contribution to the war effort, as well as denounce or advocate proposed legislation on a variety of labor issues. This followed on the heels of federal pressure to change the attitudes of workers and managers, who were often at each other's throats. Two months later the OWI chose ten network shows to hold forth on issues of wartime preparation and packaged them under the banner of *Victory Parade*. In one of these episodes, hardcore *Great Gildersleeve* fans may remember, Gildy converted his Girdle Works into a war plant that made parachutes.

Victory Theater followed next, borrowing headliners from network shows for one night a week. This was another commercial-free series like *Victory Volunteers* and *Victory Front*. It was on *Victory Theater*, in August 1942, that Amos 'n Andy first tested their new half-hour format before a live audience, and coincidentally saw their ratings shoot up. As a replacement for *Lux Radio Theater*, on summer hiatus, *Victory Theater* was used chiefly to sell war bonds.

Other shows included *Victory Parade of Spotlight Bands*, which began in the fall of 1941 before the U.S. was called to the colors; *Wings to Victory*, with its dramatizations of aerial combat and sea warfare amid servings of slur; *Victory Hour*, which commemorated the High School Victory Corps Program; *Victory Farmers on Parade*, and *Victory Radio Auction*, which began life, in the spring of 1945, as *Auction Gallery* but changed titles in August when the Japanese surrender was imminent.

Then there were the Victory broadcasts and programs celebrating VE-Day and VJ-Day, both here and in Great Britain. From VE-Day onwards the BBC painted the airwaves red with a sequence of nightly Victory programs called "Their Finest Hour," honoring the derring-do of the soldier. Another program, *Victory Reports*, recalled great moments in the war. To come full circle, radio tributes to the BBC poured in from Belgium and the Netherlands where, as recounted in last fall's *News*, Colonel Britton's V for Victory campaign was first targeted more than four years before. The Dutch presented the BBC with a bronze tablet, thanking it for the "fortitude and consolation given to the Netherlands in years of oppression." The tablet depicted a man in shackles kneeling before a wireless listening to "the voice of freedom." The Belgians beamed a two-hour "Belgium Thanks the BBC" over Radiodiffusion Nationale Belge in gratitude for firing the Belgians' courage, rallying the resistance and "forging victory."

In America, on the day Germany threw in the sponge, the *Hollywood Victory Program* pitched in with a star-packed musical salute to ending the Nazi menace. A second musical salute to victory and the Armed Forces Radio Service was heard on the "Victory Edition" of *Command Performance*. That was on August 15, 1945, a week after "the force from which the sun draws its power" was loosed over Nagasaki. The hour-long tribute was comprised of skits and musical bits from earlier AFRS shows, a delightful cut-and-paste of *Command Performance, Mail Call* and *G.I. Jive*. Two weeks later, *Chase and Sanborn Hour* announcer Ken Carpenter's retort caught Spike Jones in mid-boast:

> Jones: *I've got a surprise for you. General MacArthur wants me and my band to play in the victory parade in Tokyo.*
> Carpenter: *I can understand that. They said the surrender was unconditional.*

* * *

BOOK SHELF by Hal Stephenson

Showbiz Teams **Foreward by Jerry Lewis.**
This 52-page booklet accompanies boxed audio tapes of the 12 programs listed below. ©1997 by Radio Spirits, Inc. and Smithsonian Institution Press. Sold in book stores.

Jerry Lewis tells of his experiences with the Martin & Lewis radio show. Dean Martin smoked Luckies but their sponsor was **Chesterfield** cigarettes. In the first show, Dean pulled out a pack of **Lucky Strike** cigarettes and started smoking. The clients in the sponsor's booth went bonkers. Fortunately, the 250 people in the studio thought it was an inside joke solely for their enjoyment so they laughed harder at the jokes being broadcast. For the remaining 38 weeks of Chesterfield sponsorship, Dean put **Luckies into an *emptied Chesterfield pack,*** showed the pack to the contented client's booth, smoked his Luckies, and "no one was the wiser."

There is a story about each team and its representative program.

Lum & Abner, 3/6/49

Abbott & Costello, 1/13/44

Burns & Allen, 9/25/47

Suspense, "The Red-headed Woman" 11/17/49 with Lucille Ball & Desi Arnaz

Martin & Lewis, 1/4/52

Lone Ranger, 5/31/54 with Brace Beemer & John Todd

Bold Adventure circa 1950 with Bogart & Bacall

Ozzie & Harriet, 12/5/48

The Bickersons, 2/23/47 Don Ameche & Francis Langford

Fibber McGee & Molly, 2/11/47

Charlie McCarthy & Edgar Bergen, 11/17/46

Batman & Robin 9/5/50


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RADIO TRAITORS of World War II

(PART ONE)

by Jack A. French

The Americans who betrayed their country in World War II at the radio microphones of Germany, Japan, and Italy were a curious collection of renegades, opportunists, and fools. Very few actually hated the United States; most were anti-Semites, pro-German, or anti-Communist who used their voices to attack the enemies of the Axis powers. Some were so confused that they would later claim that they were "helping" the U.S. A few of them were so famous that their airwave nicknames became permanent additions to the U.S. vocabulary: "Tokyo Rose," "Lord Haw Haw," and "Axis Sally." But most of them skyrocketed from obscurity for a brief few years and then disappeared without a trace. Some were prosecuted for their treason, but most were not. Very few regretted their attempts to use the radio to discredit and demoralize their country.

With the exception of OTR fans, Americans today find it hard to imagine the power of the radio in World War II. But it far overshadowed the newspapers, magazines, and movies. Television was mercifully in its infancy. Therefore, it is not surprising that radio played the dominant role in World War II propaganda.

No one realized this more than the German High Command. While their military partners in Tokyo and Rome devoted little money or energy to radio propaganda, the Nazis had hundreds of people staffing their radio propaganda network. After Adolph Hitler came to power in Germany in January 1933, the German propaganda ministry was headed by the brilliant, twisted mind of Paul Joseph Goebbels. The Reichsrundfunk Gesellschaft (Reich Radio Corporation) had complete supervision over all radio stations in Germany and the conquered areas.

From 1933 to 1939 the Nazis increased their wave lengths from 3 to 18, and they boosted their daily broadcast hours of air-time

from 2 to 119. While Japan and Italy located very few American voices to parrot their politics, the Germans were fairly swamped with volunteers. They had plenty of English-speaking British and Americans, and also people who spoke Spanish and Portugese for their South American radio audience, as well as representatives from nearly every European country for the broadcasts beamed at that continent.

Most of the American citizens who lent their radio voices to the Nazis were in Germany long before the attack on Pearl Harbor. Some of them had a German heritage like Frederick Wilhelm Kaltenbach, and had returned to "the Fatherland" in the 1930's. Many were journalists, including Robert Henry Best and Constance Drexel, who followed the war clouds to Europe like a kid chasing a fire truck. Rounding out the company of turncoats in Berlin was an ex-actress, a WW I U.S. Navy officer, an MGM movie distributor, and an Irish Fascist who was born in Brooklyn, New York.

LORD HAW HAW

Most people today still believe that William Joyce, who achieved infamy as the notorious Lord Haw Haw, was British. He was not! Joyce was born on April 24, 1906 in Brooklyn. His Irish-bred father had been in the United States for ten years, and both parents were naturalized U.S. citizens. He gained that same citizenship at birth. The family returned to the British Isles when Joyce was still a youngster, and although he never set foot on U.S. soil again, he never renounced his U.S. citizenship nor did he request citizenship in another country.

By the time he was thirty years old, Joyce was a dedicated Fascist in Britain's National Socialist League and had achieved local successes with both his fists and his soap-box oratory. His hatred of Communists and worship of Hitler brought him to Germany in August 1939. One month later he had landed a job in Radio Berlin, and for the next six years he taunted the U.S. and Great Britain with his harsh nasal voice in a torrent of radio propaganda.

Life magazine in April 1940, commenting on Germany's radio propagandists, reported, "A smash hit is the mysterious nightly voice...(of) Lord Haw Haw." *The New Yorker* magazine attributed his success to the "....rasping yet rich voice (which had) an arresting quality that made it hard not to go on listening."

Joyce got his nickname Lord Haw Haw in 1939 from John Barrington, a reporter for the *London Daily Express*, who thought the derisive appellation would ruin his effectiveness. It had the opposite effect. Lord Haw Haw became so prominent that the Germans even paid him extra funds for his autobiographical book *Twilight Over England*, and they flooded Europe with copies. Joyce was so trusted by the Nazis that his radio material was not reviewed. The Nazis eventually awarded him the War Merit Cross. The gutsy street-brawler from London was the radio hero of Berlin.

AXIS SALLY

The only radio personality in Nazi Germany who seriously challenged Joyce's popularity was Axis Sally. The two aimed at different audiences since Joyce concentrated on Great Britain while Axis Sally beamed her messages to the Americans. This blonde traitor was born Mildred Elizabeth Sisk on Thanksgiving Day, November 29, 1900 in Portland, Maine. Her early education included schools

in Canada, New Hampshire, and Ohio. She acquired the surname Gillars when her mother remarried after a divorce.

She attended Ohio Wesleyan College, became stage-struck, and within a few years was a moderately successful actress in New York City. She was on tour in Europe in 1929 and then returned to Europe during the depression of the 1930's. Midge Gillars, a fairly attractive woman, was forty when she started broadcasting for the Nazis. She had a soft, cultured voice that many thought was sexy. Ernie Pyle, the chronicler of the American G.I., heard her after the landing at Anzio Beach and wrote that she "spoke good English and claimed to be American" but made odd mistakes such as mispronouncing Houston. In spite of Pyle's suspicions Axis Sally was every bit the American she claimed to be.

Some of her programs were directed toward the fighting men. She told them of the 4-F's who were making big money back home and dating their wives and sweethearts. Other shows entitled "G.I.'s Letter Box" were beamed to the home folks and featured carefully edited recordings of captured U.S. servicemen in German prisons and hospitals. Many veterans today recall the chain-smoking blonde touring the prison camps, recording the comments of gullible prisoners. Occasionally she would claim to be a Swiss nurse or a Red Cross representative in order to get an interview with the soldiers. Later the interviews would be used in programs that began with the mature sultry voice saying, "Hello, everybody, this is Midge calling America once again.

PAUL REVERE

Two men with entirely different backgrounds found themselves together in Nazi Berlin, both playing Paul Revere. This propaganda program began with an opening similar to the kids' adventure shows of that era. There was a sound of galloping hoofbeats, a flourish of fifes, and the announcer intoned, "From the heart of Hitler Germany, your messenger Paul Revere greets you again," as the strains of "Yankee Doodle" played in the background. Two American turncoats shared the role: Douglas Chandler and Robert Henry Best. Although both were journalists, their lives were quite dissimilar. Chandler was born May 26, 1889 in Chicago, and thus had the distinction of being the same age as Adolph Hitler. He was a U.S. Navy officer in World War I and later became a news reporter in Baltimore. He hated Jews and Franklin Roosevelt and eventually was being paid to denouce them over the air on Radio Berlin. Chandler arrived in Germany in 1931, took a German as his wife (his second), and by the time World War II erupted he probably expected to spend the rest of his days living in the Third Reich.

Chandler's pro-Nazi mouthings were clumsy and pedantic: "The American and British public are systematically hoodwinked and lied to by their irresponsible leaders . . . This trick is surely too hoary with age to befuddle even the nursery children who happen to waste their precious moments listening to such dream-wish rubbish."

Robert Best was born in Sumpter County, South Carolina on April 16, 1896, the son of a Methodist minister. He received his master's degree in journalism from Wofford College in South Carolina and then studied at Columbia University. During WW I he was a second lieutenant in the Coast Artillery but saw no action. He went to Austria in 1922 as a correspondent and spent the next 18 years in Vienna.

Best admired Hitler and was convinced Germany would win the war, so he threw his support to the Nazis. He and his Viennese-born wife, Erma, went to Berlin where Best delivered his propaganda tirades against the U.S. He began on the air by calling himself "Mr. Guess Who," but on May 21, 1942 after a month of guessing, he admitted his identity on the air. Like Chandler, he played Paul Revere many times but eventually was given his own show called "B.B.B.," which was a take-off on the British Broadcasting Company, standing for "Best's Berlin Broadcast." A lover of Germans and a hater of Communists, Best found it quite easy to write and deliver the material the Nazis wanted. Several times Best even appeared on the air with William Joyce, the Nazis most trusted commentator.

LESSER LUMINARIES

Among the lesser luminaries at Radio Berlin were four other renegades: Frederick Wilhelm Kaltenbach, Edward Leo Delaney, Jane Anderson, and Constance Drexel. The latter was born in Darmstadt, Germany on November 28, 1884, but her parents immigrated to the United States when she was one year old. When they became naturalized in 1898, she automatically acquired U.S. citizenship. Raised in the Boston area, Connie Drexel later became a journalist and pseudopacifist. Although she worked for newspapers in Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago, she never received the recognition she thought she deserved.

She was in Germany when Hitler took over and she stayed on, eventually getting a part-time job at Radio Berlin on a program called "Through a Woman's Eyes." On this show she mixed her mild propaganda with her limited knowledge of fashion, drama, and music. William Shirer, who met Drexel while he was writing *Berlin Diary*, claimed the Nazis hired her "principally because she's the only woman in town who will sell her American accent to them." Shirer should have known better; the Nazis had plenty of "American accents" who would sell out their country. At any rate, Drexel was under the delusion that Hitler was bringing peace, culture, and prosperity to the countries the Nazis "liberated."

Jane Anderson, unlike Drexel, led a high society life before she reached the broadcast booths of Radio Berlin. She was born January 6, 1893 in Atlanta, Georgia. Her mother died two years later and her father, a city marshall, raised her. They moved from Georgia to Yuma, Arizona where she met and married prominent music critic Deems Taylor in 1911. Most of their seven years of married life was spent in London and Paris. After their divorce she toured Europe as a correspondent-lecturer, mostly in Spain where she married Eduardo de Cienfuegos in 1934. When the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936, she supported the Franco forces and later she would claim she was captured twice and tortured by the Marxist-Loyalist army. Since Franco's "neutrality" supported Hitler, Anderson's anti-Communism drew her to Berlin.

She began her broadcasts for Hitler in early 1941, mostly pro-Nazi, anti-Communist, anti-Jewish tirades. A New York newspaper called her "the Georgia Peach who became Lady Haw Haw." She had a twice weekly program on Sunday and Thursday evenings through most of World War II. She often claimed on the air that Hitler's Third Reich was the "bulwark of Christian-Catholic civilizaiton" against Bolshevism.

Edward Delaney was almost as colorful as Anderson, although he

was a few rungs down on the social ladder. He was born December 12, 1885 at Olney, Illinois, the son of an Irish father and German mother. He was raised near Flora, Illinois and briefly attended St. Joseph's College in Illinois. With a quick wit and a glib tongue, he had no need for further education and drifted through a variety of sales and publicity jobs in the United States and abroad. He was a side-show barker, a radio producer, an MGM movie distributor, a road show actor, and a copy writer.

Delaney was in Germany when the Nazi conquest began, and he soon became a pitchman for Hitler. In his programs he claimed the Jews, FDR, and the gangsters were dragging the United States into war. Usually he used the Pseudonym E.E. Ward (a not too original variation of his first name), and his shows were called "Jack From Chicago," and "George Calling Broadway." *Movie-Radio Guide* magazine called him "Goebbel's gag-man" and said his talks were "full of slang and the kind of racy wisecracks that are considered snazzy along Broadway."

Another Midwesterner plugging for the Nazis was Fred Kaltenbach. Born in Dubuque, Iowa on March 29, 1895, he moved with his German parents to Waterloo when he was three. He graduated from college, served a stint in the U.S. Army, and returned to teach school in Waterloo. Kaltenbach lost his job there after he organized his pupils into a semi-Nazi brown-shirt brigade. He wasted no time in going to Germany where he began broadcasting on Radio Berlin in 1939.

Kaltenbach was a rarity on the Nazi air waves. His talks were clever, subtle, and sometimes nearly anti-Nazi. On one program he reported, "The Germans . . . have not been ideal either, and day by day the German positions are sinking deeper into the ground." William Shirer admitted Kaltenbach was "probably the best of the lot . . . continually fighting the Nazi Party hacks when they don't agree with him."

For two years he broadcast as Lord Hee Haw and kept Iowa residents embarrassed with his frequent references to them, including a weekly letter to "Dear Henry in Waterloo," much to the chagrin of his former schoolmate, Harry Hageman, a Waterloo attorney. On the day after Pearl Harbor he ended the speculation on his identity by announcing, "Hello, Yanks, this is Fred W. Kaltenbach speaking."

EZRA POUND

While there was no shortage of Americans to assist the propaganda efforts of the Nazis, Italy and Japan had to make do with only one significant U.S. turncoat each. Ezra Pound worked for the Italians and Tokyo Rose broadcast for the Japanese.

Pound (real name Weston Loomis) was born October 30, 1885 in the tiny village of Hailey, Idaho, but he was reared in Pennyslvania. A child prodigy, he entered college at 15 and was recognized as a poetic genius, linguist, and literary critic. He was fluent in fourteen languages by the time he was 25. A self-styled ex-patriate, Pound left the United States in 1908 and divided his time among London, Paris, and Rome.

By 1939 he had expressed great admiration for Benito Mussolini and called Italy the "seat of culture in the Occident." On the air Pound was a virulent anti-Semitic, blaming the Jews for all the world's troubles. He called upon all Americans to join with Mussolini and Hitler to fight "the

Jewish menace." Calling himself a Jeffersonian Republican, Pound claimed that Italy's Fascist dictator possessed the "heritage of Jefferson." Through the airwaves this poetic turncoat lashed out at Il Duce's enemies: the Jews, the British, and American capitalism.

TOKYO ROSE

Meanwhile in the Land of the Rising Sun, a sweet young voice from Radio Tokyo was teasing and mocking American fighting men throughout the Pacific. Japan, after stunning military successes in Manchuria, Shanghai, and Peiping, had concluded an alliance with Germany and Italy in September 1940. Shortly after the Pearl Harbor attack, the Japanese propaganda ministry set up a modest effort to demoralize the American military and civilian populace with radio programs beamed from Tokyo.

Japan's propaganda efforts in radio were little better than Italy's, and both of them together were but a tiny fraction of the German output. Actually Japan had little interest or money expended in this medium and practically no volunteers. With no other source of English-speaking voices, the Japanese attempted to staff their programs with American and British prisoners captured at Singapore, Hong Kong, and the Bataan peninusula of Luzon Island in the Philippines.

Whether or not the Japanese tried to pattern Tokyo Rose upon the techniques of Axis Sally is not certain. However, it is apparent that they shared the same format and style, consisting of nostalgia music, gentle teasing, and broad hints that all was not well back in the United States, so surrender was the best course.

Historians now believe that at least eight different women played the vocal role of Tokyo Rose, although only one was positively identified. She was Ikuko "Iva" Toguri, a Nisei (Japanese-American), who was ironically born on the 4th of July, 1916. A native of Los Angeles, Toguri was raised there and ultimately graduated from UCLA. In July of 1941 she returned to Japan, apparently to nurse a close relative. She was stranded there when the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor created a state of war between the two countries.

Never fully trusted by the Japanese authorities, she still managed to find employment as a clerk at Radio Tokyo. Several months later she found herself before the microphone, chiding and taunting American G.I.'s in the Pacific.

Actually the name Tokyo Rose was seldom used on the air and only in the last few months of World War II. Like Axis Sally, the nickname was coined and used only by the listeners. Gillars was introduced and referred to herself as Midge. Toguri, and the other women who shared her role, used a variety of names, usually Betty and Annie. It was only after hundreds of programs that Tokyo Rose used the name on the air that G.I.'s had been calling her for years.

Tokyo Rose was the star of a program called "The Zero Hour," which ran nightly from 6 to 7:15 p.m., Tokyo time. For the first twenty minutes of the show two male announcers would take turns reading news bulletins (all bad) from the United States. The beginning theme song was a spirited version of "Strike Up the Band." After the news a perky female voice would greet the listeners, "Hi, you fighting

orphans, this is your favorite playmate, Annie. How's tricks?" She would then play a series of American records, interspersed with Rising Sun propaganda. "How do you feel now that all your ships have been sunk by the Japanese Navy? How will you get home? Here's another record to remind you of home." Nearly 350 Zero Hour programs were aired from Radio Tokyo during the period October 1943 through August 1945.

(In our next issue, Jack French will tell us what happened to these "radio traitors" following the war.)

NARA'S LIBRARY CATALOGS

To obtain catalogs of what is available to members from the various club libraries, please write to the librarians listed below and enclose the price of the catalog.

CASSETTE LIBRARY CATALOG:
For a complete catalog of the available shows in our cassette library please send $2.00 to Don Aston, P.O. Box 1392, Lake Elsinore, CA 92531.

SCANFAX CASSETTE CATALOG:
A list of the various program series available in our SCANFAX cassette library is available for $1.00 and a self-addressed-stamped envelope. You can then ask for program titles in those series that are of interest to you. Send your requests to Don Aston, P.O. Box 1392, Lake Elsinore, CA 92531.

PRINTED MATERIALS LIBRARY CATALOGS:
The printed materials library has four catalogs available: the book catalog, the script catalog, the catalog of logs, and the magazine catalog. To receive all four of these, please send ten 33¢ stamps to Bob Sabon, 308 West Oraibi Drive, Phoenix, AZ 85027. You can also contact Bob at his E-MAIL address: w9did@hotmail.com

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If you are going to be changing your address please let NARA know! Send BOTH your old address AND your new address to our membership director:

Janis DeMoss
134 Vincewood Drive
Nicholasville, KY 40356

OVERHEARD: "There ought to be a knob on my TV to turn up the intelligence. There's a knob called brightness, but that doesn't seem to work.

GROWING UP ON RADIO

by

Donald R. Berhent

Coming into this world in 1937 was fortunate timing for a future devoted radio listener. With radios in every room of the house; I played, ate and fell asleep listening to everything radio had to offer.

It seemed like at times we had more cereal boxes than the local grocery as I had to have every offer being promoted by the Lone Ranger, Captain Midnight and Tom Mix among others. What great excitement it was to show off a new Lone Ranger ring or Captain Midnight secret decoder badge at school.

Thankfully my Father developed a taste for Ovaltine and Cheerios! I especially remember Saturday nights listening to the crazy antics of It Pays to Be Ignorant and rainy Sunday evenings with the creepy stories of the Shadow.

Relistening to all the great programs of the 1940's on tape brings back old memories of a far gentler era when people seemed to care more about others. It was also a great time for magazine lovers as the newstands were filled with many more publications than you now find available; including all the wonderful pulp magazines with every genre in fiction covered.

In the 1940's many items were delivered door to door, such as dairy products, coffee and tea, baked goods and the lousy, dirty blue coal as advertised on the Shadow. Thankfully there are still many tapes and publications (Chuck Schaden's *Nostalgia Digest* is one of the best: Box 421, Morton Grove, IL 60053) available to keep all the old memories alive.

Out with the old...

(in with whatever)

by Bob Burnham

A recurring theme in my columns has been comparisons to old-time radio collecting "the way it used to be" to today. Sometimes they amount to little more than thinking-out loud-meanderings, other times it's a little more in depth or even controversial.

Sometimes, I'm been able to draw comparisons between other things that are going on in our lives and the OTR world. I've had a lot of distractions and changes in my life recently, and believe it or not, THAT is part of what has kept my OTR interest fresh.

Sometimes it seems like the OTR Hobby goes to sleep for a while, then wakes up for whatever reason, though it may be in deep slumber in one persons life, and wide awake and running a marathon in other.

For me, for the most part, my OTR interests in 1999 have not just been sleeping but in "hibernation." That's the word I used on the website. In going through some old files a few months ago, however, I was reminded of the OTR "Guide" books I published in the mid 1980's. Out of curiosity, I started reviewing the last version which saw print in 1986. I disagreed with so much that I wrote back then, that it finally motivated me enough to start rewriting it. So my "rest" from OTR officially ended when that moment began! It's not that I've been overly productive or anything since then -- but my mind set has definitely moved back toward what I thought about OTR collecting then, and now.

So what has distracted me so much from OTR? Mostly what distracts MOST people from OTR... the other parts of their lives! My "day job" has always been in broadcasting. I could do a whole column on just that alone, but rather than bore you with too many details, I'll just give you a nutshell version of what "Bob" has been "up to."

Last December, I ended a 10 year tenure as Chief Engineer of a Detroit radio station with legendary call letters — WCAR — then had a stint in the Fall with a CBS-owned station with even more legendary call letters. If I were to mention the Lone Ranger, you'd know the station I was referring to. Then, the first half of 1999, I subjected myself to work for a very large company that owns over 200 stations — and became the sole technical guy for a group of five stations, mostly in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Finally, as this is being written, I've moved on from that and I'm about to start work as a technician for Specs Howard School of Broadcast Arts, which operates four student-run stations as well as television facilities. As if this wasn't enough, in the meantime, my own business most of you know in OTR as BRC Productions, unveiled an expanded radio syndication service. At this point, I think we're up to producing and distributing close to 50 hours of live programming per week. It's mostly contemporary talk shows (sorry, no OTR!). My work in today's radio has given me a lot of food for thought and numerous ideas for this series of columns.

It also gives me a heightened level of respect for those people who in the past, produced the comedies, mysteries and the rest -- using equipment which by todays standards is considered to be of Stone Age vintage. Today, it's getting harder to imagine what life was like in radio before computers and digital editing devices. I remember years ago, spending many hours editing a program on reel to reel using a splicing block and a razor blade. That is still done to a limited degree at the smallest stations, but the majority have all gone a different route.

When one imagines that so many of the best OTR shows were even done PRIOR to and without the benefit of even a simple tape recorder, you have to appreciate the level of talent and rehearsal time that went into producing a "live" show -- because it REALLY WAS live. Sound effects men made real sounds, or used massively clunky transcription turntables for pre-recorded segments. It's not like today, when you can record 250 cuts on a small disk (Mini-Disk format) up of to 144 minutes in mono, and achieve sound quality that is impossible to tell the difference between whether it's live or recorded.... and pay only about $3 for that blank disk... Regular blank Compact Disks are even less expensive.

As you may know, radio drama as it was know as OTR today, actually disappeared as an indirect result of advancing technology. A group of radio technicians figured out a way to transmit pictures along with sound. Was that a good thing? Of course it was.

Was it good that a means was devised to make movies "talk?" Of course. I always laugh at people who whimper about the "demise" of the so-called "golden" age of radio. Hey, lets go back to the horse and buggy days, while we're at it. I'm sure we put a lot of blacksmiths out of work, and people who made a career out of cleaning up horse manure!

Unless you've lived under a rock for the past decade or two, you know that eventually, home video equipment also became widespread. Videocassettes were able to yield very respectable quality indeed, but 12" laser disks could also hold entire full length feature movie in a digital format. Current technology, however, is sending that format to the same place where 8-track cartridges went. A newer format which is the same size as regular CDs has become widely accepted called DVD or Digital Video Disk, which can store twice as much information. A double sided DVD will store eight hours of video with full surround sound stereo and the players are remarkably inexpensive... about the same as what you'd pay for a good quality cassette deck (I just bought a DVD player)!

Where does all this leave the OTR world? As I've said before, n the same spot it usually sits: Kind of as a niche interest among an elite group of people, mostly still using regular cassettes, although more people have started using CDs. (Yet, imagine storing eight hours of programming on a single disk . Audio ONLY versions have MUCH higher capacity).

I see the necessity of the format changes or this very gradual evolution in OTR to be just as important as it was for me make recent changes in my "day job" employment. Why did we stop using candles to light our homes in favor of the electric light? Because electricity is safer, brighter and more cost effective than candles.

Why did we stop using reel to reel tapes? Because affordable machines were no longer being manufactured in favor of better quality formats. And why in the WORLD are those beloved cassettes becoming passe' in modern society? For a medium introduced some 35 years ago originally just for office dictation, I think we've gotten some good long usage out of a media that has now run its course.

And just why did it take me 13 years to finally think about updating my "Guide" to OTR? I'm not sure. The time was just "right." Just a couple years ago, the Beatles, after having been apart as a band for some 25 years, decided the time was "right" to release a couple new songs and a whole series of basically outtakes of their recording sessions in the 60's. Of course, it helped that an unreleased John Lennon demo had been found that was recorded prior to his being killed in 1981. In my case, I cleaned up my files and physically saw how much had changed in OTR since the previous publication that I had done in "another life." That, perhaps combined with the realization that for the first time in my adult life, I've set the "working in radio station trenches" aspect aside to become a bit involved in the educational aspect was the last bit of motivation I needed.

Next time... whatever radio gossip floats my boat or sinks my sub. Actually, a sub would be tasty right now... And by the way, I have a new address: It's P.O. Box 158, Dearborn Heights, MI 48127-0158.

As always, this column and previous columns can be found on the website: www.brcradio.com, as well as a preview of the OTR Guide book. Follow the menus or type: www.brcradio.com/nonprofit/lgn/lgn1.html to go straight to the book. — Bob Burnham 06/28/99

RADIO AND THE COMICS

by

G. L. Curry

Have you ever wondered how many strips or comic characters appeared on radio during the thirties, forties and fifties? Have you ever wondered how many comic strips or characters were based on radio programs? Have you ever wondered who it was that played the leading men in those selfsame radio programs?

Well, for whatever it's worth to you old time radio fans, rest your weary imaginations and feast your eyes on the following. Though they aren't the only ones, following are the actors I best remember for the roles listed.

COMIC CHARACTER	LEADING ACTOR/ACTORS	FIRST BROADCAST
Abbot & Costello	Bud Abbott, Lou Costello	1942
Abie's Irish Rose	Bud Collyer	1942
Aldrich Family	Ezra Stone	1939
Archie Andrews	Bob Hastings	1943
Batman	Gary Merrill	
Believe It or Not	Robert Ripley	1930
Betty Boop	Mae Questel	1932
Black Hood	Scott Douglas	1943
Blackstone, The Magician Detective	Ed Jerome	1948
Blondie	Penny Singleton	1939
Blue Beetle	Frank Lovejoy	1941
Bobby Benson & the B-Bar-B Riders	Ivan Curry	1932
Bringing Up Father	Neil O'Malley, Agnes Moorehead	1941
Buck Rogers	Matt Crowley	1931
Buster Brown Gang	Jerry Marin	1929
Captain Midnight	Ed Prentiss	1939
Casey, Crime Photographer	Stats Cotsworth	1946
Challenge of the Yukon	Brace Beemer	1947
Cisco Kid	Jackson Beck	1943
Dick Tracy	Ned Wever	1935
Don Winslow	Raymond Edward Johnson	1937
Ellery Queen	Carleton Young	1939
Flash Gordon	Gale Gordon	1935
Fu Manchu	John Daly	1932
Gasoline Alley	Jimmy McCallion	1941
Gene Autry's Melody Ranch	Gene Autry	1940
Green Hornet	Al Hodges	1938
Green Lama	Paul Frees	1949
Gumps	Wilmer Walter	1934
Gunsmoke	William Conrad	1952
Harold Teen	Eddie Firestone, Jr.	1941
Have Gun, Will Travel	John Dehner	1958
Hop Harrigan	Chester Stratton	1942
Hopalong Cassidy	William Boyd	1949

Jack Armstrong	Jim Ameche	1933
Jane Arden	Ruth Yorke	1938
Joe Palooka	Karl Swenson	1932
Jungle Jim	Matt Crowley	1935
King of the Royal Mounted	Richard Dix	??
Land of the Lost	Art Carney	1944
Li'l Abner	John Hodiak	1939
Little Orphan Annie	Shirley Bell	1931
Lone Ranger	Earle Graser, Brace Beemer	1933
Ma and Pa	Margaret Dee, Parker Fennelly	1936
Major Hoople	Arthur Q. Bryan	1942
Mandrake the Magician	Raymond Edward Johnson	1940
Mark Trail	Matt Crowley, John Larkin	1950
Meet Corliss Archer	Janet Waldo	1943
Mickey Mouse	Walt Disney	1937
Mr. and Mrs.	Jack Smart, Jane Houston	1929
Mr. District Attorney	Raymond Edward Johnson	1939
My Friend Irma	Marie Wilson	1947
The Nebbs	Gene & Kathleen Lockhart	1945
Popeye the Sailor	Det Poppen	1935
Red Ryder	Reed Hadley	1942
Reg'lar Fellers	Dick Van Patten	1941
Roy Rogers	Roy Rogers	1944
Sad Sack	Herb Vigran	1946
Saint	Vincent Price	1944
Sea Hound	Ken Daigneau	1942
Shadow	Orson Welles, Bill Johnstone, Brett Morrison	1936
Skippy	Frankie Adams, Jr.	1931
Sky Blazers	Roscoe Turner	1939
Sky King	Jack Lester	1947
Smilin' Jack	Frank Readick	1939
Straight Arrow	Howard Culver	1948
Superman	Bud Collyer	1940
Tarzan	James Pierce	1932
Tennessee Jed	Don MacLaughlin	1945
Terry and the Pirates	Jackie Kelk	1937
Tillie the Toiler	Caryl Smith	1942
The Timid Soul	Billy Lynn	1941
Tom Mix	Russell Thorson	1933
Witch's Tale	Alonzo Dean Cole	1934

Linda Ellerbee was anchoring *NBC News Overnight* when she received a qualified fan letter from a little girl, which said: "Dear Miss Ellerbee, When I grow up I want to do exactly what you do. Please do it better."

Wireless Wanderings

JIM SNYDER

RADIO SHOW LEADS TO RENAMING OF TOWN

"Hello there! We've been waiting for you!" Starting in 1940 Ralph Edwards had been opening his radio show, *Truth or Consequences*, with this greeting. But ten years later, one evening early in 1950, the words were followed by a special announcement that would greatly affect the residents of the small town of Hot Springs, New Mexico.

Prior to this 1950 broadcast, Edwards had asked his production staff to come up with some ideas for a particularly noteworthy way of celebrating the show's 10th anniversary. By this time *Truth or Consequences* had become a big-time, popular family show. Among the suggestions from the show's staff members was one from Al Simons that perhaps a town in America could be found that would be willing to change its name in honor of the tenth anniversary of the program.

So, on that evening in 1950, Edwards made the announcement that the program was seeking such a city. In return, he committed the program's producers to flying in a group of national pressmen to cover the name change. In addition, he promised the 10th anniversary show would be broadcast from that city.

Several U.S. cities sent in letters of interest with the most interesting one coming from Hot Springs, New Mexico. The history of the area went back to 1598 when the Spanish explorer Juan de Onate followed the Rio Grande northward to establish a colony in Santa Fe. Even at that time the hot mineral springs were highly regarded. The site of the present town was considered "neutral ground" by the Southwestern Indians long before the white settlement of the area. The Indians gathered here to exchange intertribal news and to bathe their wounds and ailments. The waters were given the name of Geronimo Springs after the Apache war chief. The United States gained possession of the territory in 1846 but it was necessary to subdue the hostile Apaches before settlement could be accomplished by the whites. The first homestead entry was filed here in 1910. New Mexico became a state in 1912 and the town of Hot Springs was incorporated in 1916.

The show's producer, Ed Bailey, was sent off to Hot Springs to interview the townspeople, elected city officials, and officials from the state. His report to Edwards spoke of the town's mineral baths which had helped thousands of sufferers of rheumatism and arthritis. But most important, as far as Edwards was concerned, was the report on the

Ralph Edwards

city's work in the rehabilitation of crippled children from a widespread area at the Carrie Tingley orthopedic hospital.

This last item carried a great deal of weight with Ralph Edwards. Although it was not generally known, he was one of the countries foremost fund raisers for charitable causes. He had helped raise millions of dollars for the March of Dimes, the American Heart Association, and the American Cancer Society. He helped build hospital wings and school buildings to name only a few.

The staff felt that the city it was looking for had been found and Edwards said, "Like the show, the city had the inclination, the place for recreation, and the desire and means of helping one's fellow man."

It was now up to the voters of Hot Springs, in a special election, to decide whether or not the city should change its name to Truth or Consequences. The result was 1,294 in favor of the change and 295 against. So, on March 31, 1950, Hot Springs legally changed its name to Truth or Consequences.

The following afternoon, Saturday, April 1, the first Truth or Consequences Fiesta was staged, bringing approximately 10,000 people to the town. That night, the *Truth or Consequences* 10th anniversary radio show was broadcast from its namesake.

It was the start of a unique relationship between Ralph Edwards and the town. The radio show ended in 1956 and its television version continued until 1965, but for many years after the demise of both of these shows, Ralph Edwards made the annual trip to Truth or Consequences, New Mexico for the fiesta. Each time he brought with him a number of celebrities, all at his own expense. Of the town, Edwards said, "Truth or Consequences, New Mexico is one of the most unusual health, recreational and resort cities in the United States. It is both a winter and summer resort, and is possibly the most publicized city of its size in the country. With all this, it still remains a very pleasant and quiet county seat on the famed Rio Grande, where the people have never lost their hometown friendliness.

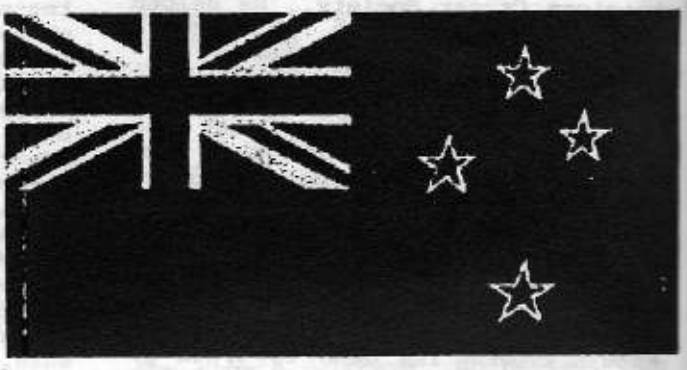
Truth or Consequences is located in southwestern New Mexico, just off highway I-25 which runs from Albuquerque, New Mexico to El Paso, Texas. The town currently has a population of just a little over 6,000 people. The Geronimo Springs Museum is located on Main Street, and among other things, houses mementos of Ralph Edwards in its "Ralph Edwards Room." It is open Monday through Saturday from 9:00 to 5:00, but is closed Sundays and on major holidays.

A woman said that her husband had to work one wet Saturday, so he took along their dog, Boo. At the end of the day, Don phoned and asked her to come to the job site with jumper cables. She wondered how the battery in the car had died. "It was too muddy outside for Boo," her husband explained sheepishly, "so I let him stay in the car and listen to the radio."

FROM ACROSS THE POND

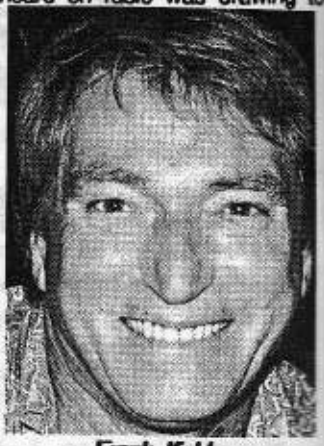
by Ray Smith

WALTZIN MATILDA!



At long last your wish is my command! As many of you have reminded me, it's been ages since I promised to write a column about Australian Radio. For the past 5 years, *Reader's Digest* has promised me that I'd win their million dollar jackpot . . . and I'm still waiting! But *NARA News* is the friendly little publication that 'delivers.' What I actually promised, was 'a day in the life of Australian Radio' and that's exactly what you're gonna get (maybe). The day I have in mind is December 17, 1958. Before I'm bombarded with phone calls, faxxes and e-mails inquiring about the historical significance of that great day in Australian broadcasting history, let me give you a quick profile of my interest in the land of Oz. As a believer in the old adage, 'travel broadens the mind' I decided to treat my 3 kids to a trip to the Great Barrier Reef, until I encountered another 'great barrier' . . . what it was gonna cost Never mind, kids, I'll teach you an Australian song instead. That evening I taped a particularly beautiful and patriotic ballad from A.B.C. shortwave, "Advance Australia Fair." It's the Ozzie National Anthrm, an Australian version of America the Beautiful. Judging by the sighs, yawns and expressions of boredom it was a winner! That weekend my eldest daughter who was barely into her teens bought a brand new cassette. "Here's some real Australian music, dad!" she enthused. And for the next 6 months, I was blasted out of my tranquility by a rock 'n roll band called Men At Work, screaming at the top of their lungs that, 'We belong to the land Dahn Undah, to the land, to the land, Dahn Undah.' (Down Under). OK, Men At Work, I believe you. Now BELT UP!!

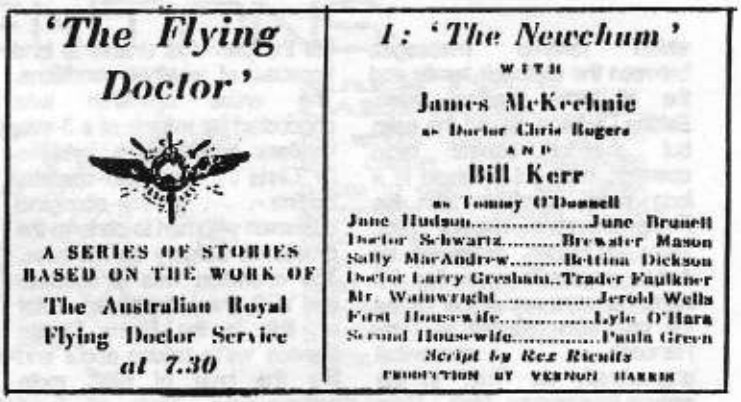
Whatever happened to 'good' Australian pop music? I was reminded of the day in 1962 when I sat in the Winter Gardens Theatre, Morecambe, England enjoying a 'new Oz singing sensation from Dural near Sydney'. A week earlier, young Frank Ifield's recording of 'I Remember You-hoo' became the most requested song on BBC Radio, a world-wide hit and then a favorite on 'oldie' stations everywhere. And while young Frankie-boy was serenading us with a particularly upbeat rendition of the Australian UNofficial national anthem, Waltzin' Matilda, one of the most fascinating drama series ever heard on radio was drawing to



Frank Ifield

the end of its 7 year stint on the BBC Light Programme. Although the show had a distinctly Australian theme and was performed by a troupe of actors, most of whom were originally from either Oz of New Zealand, the series owed its authentic 'Australian' sound to the skill of its production team, Australian born scriptwriter Rex Rienits (pronounced Rye-nits) producer Vernon Harris and the highly talented sound effects crew who toiled at the BBC London studios. The Flying Doctor was described simply as a series of stories based on the work of the Royal Australian Flying Doctor Service.

Living as they did back then and still do today, on a 'tight little island,' a highly urbanized piece of real estate on which it has become increasingly difficult to 'get away from it all,' the 50 million Brits were fascinated by this opportunity to escape by radio, to the Australian Outback. It gave them a chance to sample a lifestyle and society they could barely comprehend. Much of Australia was a vast empty desert, 32 times larger geographically than the UK but with a density of population as low as one person for each fifty square miles. That kind of low-population ratio would be hard to find anywhere in Britain, even in the rugged and still-remote mountains of the bonnie Scottish Highlands. UK audiences just couldn't picture leaving their farmhouses, travelling non-stop by Land Rover for an entire day and still not having reached their 'next door neighbors' home by nightfall. So much for 'popping next door for a quick cuppa tea.' That was life as it was lived and is still lived, in the Australian Outback.



Britons were used to the state-subsidized National Health Service (NHS), in which their every medical need was supplied instantly and 'cost free.' The UK's NHS has become the envy of every civilized society in the world. And while Australia took its cues from Mother England in developing a similar free medicare plan for all its citizens, one thing Oz could not emulate was that of immediate access to doctors and hospitals. This was especially true of the Outback. In the early years of the century people in the Outback died from illnesses which would be simple to treat in an equipped hospital. The Royal Australian Flying Doctor Service owed its beginnings to a visionary Catholic priest who roamed the outback by camel. Father John Flynn imagined the Australian Outback linked by wireless transmitters and served by qualified Doctor-Pilots in 'flying machines.' His lobbying paid off. In 1928 the first-ever Flying Doctor service began. By the 1960's two-thirds of Australia's vast continent, was served by Flying Doctor bases. Each base had a doctor, a nursing sister, a pilot, and a fast, medically-equipped aircraft. When the Flying doctor made 'house calls' his nearest patient could live 400 miles away. The average cost of a single one-way medical emergency flight in 1959 funds, was around 200 pounds sterling. And yet the Flying Doctor service was provided absolutely free!

When Dr. Chris Rogers, the fictitious BBC Flying Doctor was on his way to treat an emergency, the patient's family were able to stay in touch by means of their powerful battery-operated 'transceivers' (two-way radios) which were to be found in most Outback homesteads. Back at Flying Doctor base, there was a central 'radio-station'

which relayed messages between the Outback family and the air-borne medical team. Bettina Dickson played the calm but cheerful central radio operator, who got involved in a long 'radio' courtship with the Flying Doctor's cheeky pilot, Terry O'Donnell, portrayed by Aussie vaudeville comedian Bill Kerr. I always remember Bill as the guy who referred to Tony Hancock, somewhat ungraciously as 'Tub,' in the early Hancocks Half Hour programs. Bill Kerr returned to Australia years ago and the last I heard was still appearing in their local movies and on those enormously popular Australian TV soap operas. For me there was a special thrill of excitement whenever I heard Bettina Dickson's famous radio signal, 'This is Wallamboola Base to Flying Doctor. Come in, Flying Doctor'. Then we'd hear one of the best-known radio actors of his day, James McKechnie who starred as Dr. Chris Rogers. Unlike the other regulars, McKechni was a Brit. I will always remember the gut-wrenching tension when an amputation had to be carried out, but the pilot was unable to land because of weather conditions. The entire operation was conducted by means of a 3-way wireless transmission between Dr Chris . . . to radio operator Bettina . . . to the aboriginal bushman who had to perform the gruesome surgery on his boss. The operation was a success and YES, the patient lived. After all, this is the Flying Doctor Service we're talking about and like the best of BBC radio programming, 'they all lived happily ever after.' The Flying Doctor was broadcast on the BBC Light Programme from 1958 until 1963.

Those 'primitive' 2-way radio's which were originally installed in Australian homesteads as part of the Royal Australian Flying Doctor Service, helped to open up communications with the Outback. The radios eventually became a sort of radio community center, the source of 'town gossip' as housewives traded recipes, ordered supplies, announced community meetings and stayed in touch with their distant neighbors. The Flying Doctor radio program offered a fascinating glimpse of the Australian Outback and accurately depicted the role played by radio transceivers, in bringing some of the accoutrements of civilization including Medicare, to the vast Australian bush.

In case you are wondering about the significance of December 17, 1958 in the history of Australian broadcasting, please wonder no more. I have to confess it was simply one of the transmission dates for that most 'Ozzified' of BBC radio productions, The Flying Doctor. Until the day when I DO tell you about a 'day in the life of Australian Radio' all I can say is, G'day Mates and . . .

Cheerio for now.

NARA NEWS ON TAPE FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Bill Bright, a retired Canadian broadcaster, records the material from each issue of the *NARA News* on cassette for our members with vision problems. Don Aston duplicates the cassettes and sends them out to members who might need this service. If you know of members, or prospective members, who would benefit from this, please contact Don Aston at P.O. Box 1392, Lake Elsinore, CA 92531. He can be reached by phone at (909) 244-5242.

CONVENTIONS:

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The various conventions around the country are outstanding places to enjoy old time radio. All provide re-creations of old radio shows and workshops with some of the stars of old time radio. We encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities to add a new dimension to your hobby.

We list dates here as soon as we receive them so that you can plan ahead.

NOTE: The following is the most recent information that we have received, however changes do sometimes occur. We urge you to check with the contact person listed for up-to-date information.

① **THE 14TH ANNUAL OLD TIME RADIO AND NOSTALGIA CONVENTION** is scheduled for April 28 & 29, 2000. This convention is held at the Radison Hotel on the north side of Cincinnati, Ohio. The contact person is Bob Burchette, 10280 Gunpowder Rd., Florence, KY 41042. The phone is (606) 282-0333.

② **THE 11TH ANNUAL RADIO CLASSICS LIVE** is to be held May 5 & 6, 2000 at Massasoit Community College, Brockton, Massachusetts. Information can be obtained from Prof. Bob Bowers, Massasoit Community College, 1 Massasoit Blvd., Brockton, MA 02302. Phones: (508) 588-9100 (ext. 1906) OR (508) 295-5877 evenings.

③ **THE 16TH ANNUAL LUM & ABNER SOCIETY CONVENTION** will be held on June 26 & 27, 2000 in Mena, Arkansas at the Best Western Lime Tree Inn. For information please contact Tim Hollis, 81 Sharon Blvd., Dora, AL 35062. The phone is (205) 648-6110.

④ **THE REPS RADIO SHOWCASE VIII** is scheduled for June 30 & July 1, 2000 at the Seattle Center in Seattle, Washington. You can obtain information on this event from Mike Sprague, P.O. Box 723, Bothell, WA 98041. Phone: (425) 488-9518.

⑤ **THE 25TH ANNUAL FRIENDS OF OLD TIME RADIO CONVENTION** is scheduled for Oct. 19 - 22, 2000 at the Holiday Inn North at the Newark, New Jersey International Airport. The hotel provides free shuttle service back and forth to the airport. Contact person is Jay Hickerson, Box 4321, Hamden, CT 06514. Jay can be reached by phone at (203) 248-2887.

⑥ **THE 18TH ANNUAL SPERDVAC CONVENTION** will be held Nov. 10 thru 12, 2000 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel at the Los Angeles International Airport. A free shuttle is provided for those flying. The person to contact for information is Larry Gassman, Box 1163, Whittier, CA 90603. He can be reached by phone at (562) 947-9800.

Fort Laramie

First heard: January 22, 1956
Last heard: October 28, 1956

"*Fort Laramie*, starring Raymond Burr as Captain Lee Quince. Specially transcribed tales of the dark and tragic ground of the wild frontier. The saga of fighting men who rode the rim of empire. And the dramatic story of Lee Quince, captain of calvary." Produced and directed by Norman Macdonnell and also starred Vic Perrin as Sgt. Goerss, Harry Bartell as Lt. Seiberts and Jack Moyels as Maj. Daggett. Music was by Amerigo Marino and sound effects were by Bill James, Ray Kemper and Tom Hanley. Announcer was Dan Cubberly. Writers included John Meston, John Dunkel, Les Crutchfield and Kathleen Hite.

FORT LARAMIE

There were 40 episodes in all of Fort Laramie with one being a repeat. John Dehner starred as Capt. Quince in an audition episode on July 25, 1955.

Fanny Brice

Born: Fannie Borach
October 29, 1891 New York, New York

As a child, Fanny would sing sad songs, while shedding real tears, for the coin-throwing crowds at Coney Island. On Vaudeville, Fanny starred in *The Honeymoon Express, Nobody Home, Why Worry?, Fanny* and *Sweet and Low*. Baby Snooks was first heard on radio on *The Ziegfeld Follies of the Air* in 1936. As Snooks, Brice was heard on the *Good News of 1938* (also 1939 and 1940), *Maxwell House Coffee Time, Toasties Time* and *The Baby Snooks Show*. Barbara Streisand portrayed Fanny's early life in the hit movie, *Funny Girl*. Miss Brice died May 29, 1951.

Baby Snooks

Hanley Stafford played Daddy Higgins and Lalire Brownell, Lois Corbet and Arlene Harris played Mommy Higgins. Writers included; Phil Rapp, Jess Oppenheimer, Everett Freeman, Sid Dorfman, Arthur Stander, etc.

Radio Shop

by B.J. George

Some of you may notice a slight change in formatting for this set of Radio Collector Cards. They were designed to the dimensions of a standard cassette box liner card so that you may photocopy them onto regular paper or card stock at your local copy center and use them in your cassette boxes. Remember, like all Radio Shop Collector Cards that appear in NARA News, they are copyrighted and may not be sold or distributed. They are intended for your personal use only.

I hope you enjoy this new format and that you find the cards useful in your cassette collecting.

Note: If you wish to change the title on the spine, simply cover up the existing title with a piece of white Post-It type note paper cut slightly smaller than ½" by 4".

Cards 32, 33, 34 & 35
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Here are just a few of the ways sound effect artists deceived our ears. FOOTSTEPS: Sound artist stepping repeatedly in a gravel box. HORSE'S HOOF BEATS: Drumming two vacuum cups or half coconut shells on a board or in a sand box. THUNDER: Tapping horsehide stretched over a frame or shaking a suspended piece of sheet metal. AUTOMOBILE CRASH: Dropping several objects such as stove piping, steelbars and tin cans into a box containing broken glass. RUSTY DOOR: A fiddle bow pulled across a wooden strawberry box. FRYING FOOD: A wet cloth on a hot plate. PERSON BEING STABBED: Stabbing an icepick into a head of cabbage. CRACKLING FIRE: Crumpling a piece of cellophane. CANNON BLAST: Tap of a tympani hammer. ANTIQUE CAR: An electric motor attached to a tin washtub with pieces of tin and scrap iron rattling in the bottom of the tub.

SOUND EFFECTS

SEVERAL MARCHING FEET: Wooden pegs suspended by wires in a frame box and moved rhythmically up and down. MACHINE GUN: Tapping a telegraph key mounted on a long amplifying box.

Eddie Cantor

Born: Edward Israel Iskowitz

January 31, 1892 in New York, New York

Cantor was raised by his maternal grandmother on New York's lower East Side. His first stage appearance earned him $5 at Miner's Bowery Theatre Amateur Night. Eddie performed as a singing waiter and on vaudeville. He starred in the *Ziegfeld Follies* and in the musicals *Kid Boots* and *Whoopee!* Cantor made his radio debut on Rudy Vallee's *Fleischmann Hour* in 1931. He then began his own show, *The Chase and Sanborn Hour*. He moved to tv 1950 with *The Colgate Comedy Hour*. Cantor received several humanitarian awards including Israel's Medallion of Valor in 1962. His life story was told in the 1953 film, *The Eddie Cantor Story*. Mr. Cantor died October 10, 1964.

EDDIE CANTOR

Regulars on Eddie's show included Jimmy Wallington, Harry Von Zell, Bert Gordon, Harry Einstein, Bobby Breen, Deanna Durbin and Dinah Shore. His theme song was *One Hour With You*.

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NARA CLASSIFIEDS

Non-commercial ads are free to all members. Your ad will be placed in one issue, but you can resubmit it as often as you like.

The newly revised 1999 edition of the "NARA OTR SOURCE LIST" is now available. This six-page compendium lists the contact information for all of the following: 20 OTR membership clubs, 4 unaffiliated OTR publications, 16 fan clubs, 9 state archives, 45 OTR audio dealers, 8 nostalgia merchants, 11 antique radio clubs, 21 OTR museums and libraries, 3 dealers in blank tape, 6 annual conventions, current list of OTR web sites, 3 contemporary OTR drama groups, and 2 charity organizations that seek OTR tapes. Cost is $2.00 to NARA members and $3.00 to others. Send payment in stamps or cash to Jack French, 5137 Richardson Drive., Fairfax, VA 22032. PLEASE, no checks...our profit margin cannot justify sending Jack to the bank and post office. And send stamps in some usable denomination. Seven 33¢ ones would be about right. All profits go to NARA so be generous. Orders filled the same day by return first class mail. (Please do not post this list on the Internet since it is a NARA fund-raiser.) Get your updated copy soon.

****

We have a listing of about 400 books dealing with old time radio that might be useful to you in building your OTR library. Each entry lists the title, author, publisher and date of publication, a brief description of the contents, and the ISBN number if applicable. We know of no other list that is as complete as this one. Cost is $2.00 to NARA members and $3.00 to others. Please send payment in cash or seven 33¢ stamps (NO checks please) to B.J. George, 2177 South 62nd Street, West Allis, WI 53219. All profits will be given to NARA.

****

NARA member Ray Barfield invites you to contribute your recollections to a book on the early audiences of television, from TV's earliest days to about 1980. He is looking for black and white or "Living Color" memories of television sets, antennas and reception problems, individual or family viewing habits, favorite or unfavorite TV programs, characters, events, or commercials. You might tell how TV dialogue lines or character names became "sayings" or nicknames among your family or friends. Descriptions of TV rooms or other viewing areas would be very useful, as would details about how your family adapted its living patterns to the television schedule. In short, the author would welcome any recollections that would help to show how the electronic picture box became a part of our lives and changed our view of the world. Please send your early TV-watching recollections, whether a paragraph or two or even several pages, to Ray Barfield, 102 Ft. Rutledge Rd., Clemson, SC 29631 or by e-mail to brayfor@clemson.edu. Please include a return address.

****

A lady in England is looking for copies of the radio show "Vick's Open House" that featured Jeanette MacDonald. If you can help with this, please contact Roger Hill, 2161 Whitman Way #31, San Bruno, CA 94066.

****

Looking for a movie called "Interlude." It was made in 1968, lasts 113 minutes, made in the UK and the director was Kevin Billington. I think it was released by Columbia/Domino. That's all the information I have on it, except that Georges DeLarue did the music and the theme is outstanding. Robert Simpson, 4565 S.E. 57th Lane, Ocala, FL 34480.

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C-BAND BACKYARD SATELLITE DISH OWNERS: Tune to the audio sub-carrier of WGN or The Outdoor Channel. (do not confuse C-Band with the new RCA dss 18 inch dishes)
WGN= G5, Tr. 7, 6.8 wideband The Outdoor Channel= G1, Tr. 24, 7.4 wideband

CABLE TELEVISION SUBSCRIBERS: YUSA is offered as an audio service on public access Channel 13B of TCI Cablevision in Dallas, TX. and on many other cable systems throughout North America. Yesterday USA is free to cable TV companies, so if your system does not carry YUSA, send us $1.20 in postage to receive our free guide "How to Get Old Time Radio Shows on Cable TV". Then, contact your local cable TV system.

INTERNET USERS: YUSA program audio is also available "live" on the internet any where in the world. Using a 486 computer, equipped with a modem and a sound card, YUSA can be heard 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our web page also features a "live" OTR chat room, and has links to many other OTR web sites around the world.

dss SATELLITE & SHORTWAVE: A special 1 hour version of YUSA is carried twice daily (at 7:00 AM & 12 midnight Eastern) on dss audio channel 530. Beginning in late 1997, YUSA will also be available world wide, via shortwave. Details will be announced later.

YESTERDAY USA SUPERSTATION
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The Web site address for Yesterday USA is *www.broadcast.com/radio/old-time/yesterday/*

Information.....972/889-YUSA
Fax.....972/889-2FAX
Call-in Line #1.....972/889-TALK
Call-in Line #2.....972/889-BILL
Audio via Telephone.....972/889-20TR

Three *NARA NEWS* columnists (Don Aston, Frank Bresee, and Bob Burnham) all have regular OTR broadcasts on the YESTERDAY USA SUPERSTATION. This tells you how to find them.

A TIP OF THE ATWATER DIAL TO....

The following members for financial donations to NARA. Your generosity is appreciated.

Don Aston - Lake Elsinore, California
Janis DeMoss - Nicholasville, Kentucky
B.J. George - West Allis, Wisconsin

All contributions to NARA are tax deductable.

B.J. George for the donation of three scripts and one log to the printed materials library.

SPERDVAC and its Acquisitions Chairman, Harold Gordon, for a very large number of duplicate scripts from their library. These have all been added to our printed materials library.

Gene Larson, NARA's staff artist, for our centerfold in this issue.

Don Berhent for the membership cartoon on page 48.

Bob Sabon who continues to do such a fine job with NARA's printed materials library. Have you checked into it to see what might be of use to you? Information on the library can be found on page 33.

Bill Bright who does a simply magnificent job of putting each issue of the *NARA NEWS* on cassette for our members who are visually impaired. Information on this program can be found on page 43.

Jim Cox on the publication of his new book *The Great Radio Soap Operas* (see pages 13 and 18). He's now working on his next book about "radio's audience participation shows."

Our columnists in this issue: Don Berhent, Frank Bresee, Bob Burnham, Jim Cox, G.L. Curry, Jack French, B.J. George, Jack Palmer, John Pellatt, Ray Smith, John Stanley, Hal Stephenson, Ken Weigel, and Harlan Zinck.

Those who have already sent in articles for future issues: Don Berhent (5 articles), Frank Bresee, Jack French (2 articles), Gene Larson, Bob Mott (2 articles), Chuck Seeley (2 articles), Hal Skinner, Ray Smith, and Hal Stephenson (6 articles).

DEADLINES

December 15 for the winter issue
March 15 for the spring issue

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